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MISS CLAIRE'S PUPILS

BY

MATTIE S. SMITH

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Mattie S. Smith

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MISS CLAIRE'S POEM.

Followed by two of her interesting pupils, Cathey and Paul, Miss Claire glided, hurriedly, through the door of the school room, and started down. At the head of the stairs, the two frolicsome cherubs, laughing and dancing and skipping, made several comical efforts to grasp her dress; but their intentions were discovered and tactfully frustrated, and then she swept down the steps so nimbly, and with such velocity, that it was absolutely impossible for them, even with their youthful, elastic springs, to come up with her.

"Ha! ha! ha! I caught you, anyway," chirped Paul, tantalizingly, as they reached the landing below.

"It's a poor trapper that couldn't catch a bird after its flight into the cage," Miss Claire quickly returned, laughingly.

"But you're not a bird, and you didn't flight into a cage, either," retorted Paul, briskly, for he had failed to apprehend the true meaning of the lady's words.

"I think you're all in a cage; so I will just open the door, and let you fly away to the open air, and to perfect liberty," said Mr. Bohanan, the children's father, who had reached the closed

screen just in time to catch Paul's remark; then he held the door open for the trio to pass out. They availed themselves of this privilege, immediately, and bounded out into the open air, as jolly a trio as could have been found anywhere that morning.

They had reached the yard gate before missing Bertha, who was yet in the school room, and Paul, always exceedingly anxious for both sisters to accompany them in their morning strolls, turned abruptly, and cried loudly: "You'd better come on, Ber-tha!" but no reply came, and Bertha did not appear.

After a few moments' desultory waiting, during which time Miss Claire fingered an unmelodious sonata on her fan, Cathey got a splinter in her finger by trying to scratch paint off the fence, while Paul chased a butterfly round the yard, and still no sign of Bertha, the governess said, insistently: "Let Bertha lounge, if she wishes to! Our pedestrian exercises, for want of time, must be cut quite short this morning, anyway."

Cathey readily acceded to the proposition, but acquiescence was not so easy with Paul, at least, not until he had said, with a vim: "Bertha's not lounging. She's not sick, and she's not lazy; but she is poring over some old book. I'll wager a gold piece she's doing that very thing."

The others, knowing Bertha fully as well as Paul knew her, would not stake against his wager; but they advised him not to criticise too heavily,

as he was frequently found in the same row with Bertha.

Paul was quite an aspiring young man himself, ten years old, always eager to grasp new ideas, and with an extraordinary child-memory; but, when it came to diving into the meaning of intricate problems—child-problems, of course—on the spur of the moment, his perception was most tardy, and his comical guesses were frequently occasions of great merriment. But he enjoyed such diversions himself, as much as any one, for, coupled with his studious nature, was a spirit of fun, satire and jollity.

On their return, and entrance into the school room, they found Bertha snugly ensconced in an easy chair, near an open library, where the governess kept some of her favorite books, magazines, and stationary; so, all this time, the scholastic Miss Bertha had been deeply engrossed in the investigation of the literature around her—a privilege which had been freely granted by her governess. Though, for a few minutes prior to the return of the pedestrians, her entire attention had been thoroughly absorbed in what she considered an exquisite poem. This poem was on the flyleaf of one of Miss Claire's books, and with her name attached. Bertha could hardly trust her eyes, so incredible did it seems that her governess, her own Miss Claire, had actually written a poem. All along she had acknowledged her intelligence, her superiority, but had never at-

tributed such a feat to her as writing a poem. Was a poem any great wonder? Bertha had some very peculiar ideas about it. She did not esteem poets as angels, somewhat similar to the spirits in heaven, neither did she attribute to them any unusual earthly superiority, not possessed by other mortals, but there was something about them, "some incomprehensible something," she said to herself, that drew a peculiar line of demarcation between them and others, and she had never dreamed that Miss Claire possessed that peculiar something. Yet, to those who would accept it, here was ample proof of that fact. So deeply engaged was she in trying to solve the mystery, by getting this evidence and her incredulity reconciled, that she was almost unconscious of the near approach of the three, who, amid gay pranks and the most enthusiastic levity, had left the room half an hour previous.

"Oh, Miss Claire, I have found a poem, just the sweetest little lyrical poem, if I understand the meaning of the word 'lyrical,' on the flyleaf of your book!" Bertha rattled off, wild with excitement, when her consciousness returned to her environments. "I never knew before that you could write poetry, but I do believe this would be ——" she paused for some flashing adjective, but, failing to catch it, she used a very trite one—"nice indeed, if I could only grasp the full meaning of it; the style and diction are so charming."

Entirely ignorant of the existence of the poem

to which Bertha referred, Miss Claire leaned over her shoulder, and read the following effusion of former days:

LANGUAGE OF THE STARS.

"Like dreams so high, in the deep blue sky,
Shedding rich beauty thro' the night,
As they sparkle and twinkle, or sigh—
Are those stars in the lofty height.

"And as I glance on their radiance,
Illuminating all land and sea,
The scene advances some semblances,
In the brightest—a group of three.

"Bright visions unfold, of truths untold,
Stealing down softly thro' the night,
As I behold the attitude cold,
Of the blazing, sparkling star, Light.

"On the one's face in the middle space,
Are emblems of infinite ease,
Lighted clear thro' by the other two—
It is the glorious star, Peace.

"On the last one's face I see a trace
Of the pure sky in heaven above,
Throwing soft beams over earthly scenes—
It's the immaculate star, Love.

"This star is the brightest by far,
Its emblems come plainest to view,
For it makes or mars these other stars—
Their power, their glory, their hue."

—Written 1850, age 20.

"I'm truly surprised at finding this on the fly-leaf of my Rhetoric. I now recall writing it, distinctly enough, the time, circumstance and all, but haven't the remotest memory of copying it in this book. Everything I wrote in those days

must have been supplemented with my age—a piece of egotistical pomposity, I suppose. What else could it have been?"

She laughed again, at the humorously ridiculous motive, but Bertha, wholly absorbed in the first part of the sentence, failed to catch the humorous ending, and asked: "Did you really write something else? How I would like to see it all, but, first of all, I'd like for you to explain the meaning of those stars more fully. I'd understand them so much better, and get into the deepest beauty of the poem, if you'd explain them in a plain, straightforward, prosaic way. Please do, Miss Claire, and give the circumstances connected with the writing of the verses. I do so like the real-tity of things." Though Bertha was a bookworm, and though she often read with much care, she had not yet passed beyond the line where it was impossible to make mistakes in getting the meaning of what she read.

"That's dull, like a wintry day with a cloudy sky!" interrupted Cathey, who was much more apt to cling to the commonplace than Paul, though two years his senior.

"But there's a purpose, and a very grand purpose, too, in a 'wintry day with a cloudy sky,' " returned Bertha, sharply, and with a look that made Cathey believe that she had made some terrible blunder.

Miss Claire smiled approvingly at Bertha's droll wit, and then informed her that her request

would be complied with during the morning intermission; it was almost class-time now. Bertha was perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, which was plainly evidenced by her face, bright and shining with anticipation's glow, as she pored over her lessons, and the happy prospect seemed to make her mind more logical, to help her with problems in a way entirely new to her. Her lessons were above an average, and, at the first jingle of the bell, she desked her book, hastily, rushed to her teacher quite tempestuously, and looked, with inquisitive eyes, the question that modesty kept her from reiterating.

Miss Claire, with her clear, keen perception, needed no repetition of the morning's behest; so, sinking in the embrasure of a low window, she pulled Bertha down by her side, and said, kindly: "And you want to know the time and circumstances of that poetic output, do you?"

"I do! oh, I do!" she ejaculated, with immense enthusiasm.

Paul and Cathey, with eager, but wounded looks on their childish faces, were fronting the others, eyeing first one and then the other, with an occasional "don't-like-it-expression" sweeping through their mysterious countenances; for it was most difficult to reconcile Cathey to conversations of this kind, at any time, and Paul only occasionally.

"And you want to know all the details?" queried Miss Claire, smiling benignly upon her

charming inquisitor, after having gotten well into the story.

"If there's no secrets about it, I'd like to know everything," was the thoughtful reply, for Bertha had no desire, not the least shadow of a desire, to infringe upon the rights and pirivleges of others.

"Well, there are no secrets, dear, and, to be plain with you, my life has never afforded a real secret. I could certainly enjoy a secret."

She paused a moment, and looked very solemn at the thought of this destitution; then she proceeded: "The circumstance, there was but one, that inspired the writing of the poem, was simple enough. I had just sent what I considered my masterpiece, 'The Frolic of the Frogs,' to a popular paper, which was immediately returned, with most prolific thanks and regrets. The editor also advised me not to write poetry, that he didn't think it my calling, unless I could do better, and so on."

"But I'd do it, spite of all he could say," broke in Bertha, transcendently.

The reply to this remark was a smile, a broad, sunny one, and then the recital continued: "That was three years ago, you see. I was young then, with a wonderful lack of independence and self-reliance, but with so much confidence in humanity that I thought everybody was truthful, in business affairs, and most especially did I so consider the leaders of public sentiment, as edit-

ors; so I felt that the advice must be accepted. The failure was keen and oppressive, until I reviewed the many other good and useful professions that I might enter, and enjoy. That reviewal took place as I lounged in an old bamboo chair on the porch, one charming mid-summer night, when there was no light, save the light of stars, and they were shedding their most effulgent glory over the whole earth, making it easy and pleasant for night marauders of every description. I gazed fondly, and meditatively, upon those brilliant gems in the azure sky above, and forced myself to believe that the blessings of life could be almost as numerous. Three of the brightest were in a row. Their size and effulgence rendered them more attractive than the rest, and I straightway had them to symbolize Light, Peace, and Love—three of the most essential things in existence. Around those three stars I wove the most brilliant theories, or wake-dreams, rather, of which the verses are but a poor illustration. What was my poor little loss compared to light, physical or intellectual? or to peace, the final adjuster of every wrong? Or love, the beautifier of all gifts, material or spiritual?

"Oh, I could never tell the delicate webs I then wove, the air-castles I built. I could take up the commonest manual labor, and glorify it, yes, I could, and that I would. It was not necessary to write poetry, or do any other great thing,

in order to make one's talent count for something. I had everything worth possessing, light, peace, love, conjoined with youth, health, and a will, and I determined to make them count for something. Such were my dreams, my lofty dreams in the star-light that night, when I scribbled off the verses you found. The poem is crude, notwithstanding your praise, my dear, and I'm exceedingly surprised to have it cross my pathway again."

"Oh, it's just exquisite, I think," assured Bertha, in her characteristic, decisive way.

"I don't like poetry much, no way," said Cathey, decisively; but I do like young people's stories. Did you ever write a young people's story, Miss Claire?"

"Yes, dear; but, should you see one, you'd probably pronounce it as dull as the poem."

"No'mam, I'd not; indeed I'd not! I'd say it was the brightest, sparklinest thing I ever heard. All children's stories are."

"Do tell it to us right now," cried Paul, entreatingly, as he advanced a step and laid one hand on Miss Claire's shoulder, his usual way of appealing to her for any special favor.

"We haven't time now, dear, but I will the very first opportunity," as she consulted her watch.

"Thank you, Miss Claire."

Bertha, who had been solemnly meditative for some time, now spoke: "I think the most

interesting stories are about authors, whether they are famous or are just struggling for a place, or about painters or sculptors, or any one who has done a beautiful work. I do so like to hear about how they struggled and won success. When mother and I were making a tour through Mexico, I saw a picture in the cathedral at Cuernavaca, the beautiful solemnity of which impressed me more deeply than anything of the kind ever did. The memory of it is yet in my mind. The picture was 'Christ in Mary's lap,' after his crucifixion, you know, and it was painted by Van Dyck. Do you know anything about him?"

"It has been sometime since I read his biography, yet I think I could sketch it, briefly."

"Then do tell me about him, please, Miss Claire. I have thought so many times of the dexterous hands that painted that wonderful picture, and have longed to know a great deal about the painter."

"Don't tell it, Miss Claire; it's so tiresome. I don't like stories about the great folks that we know nothing at all about. I'd not half understand it as well as I'd understand a story about children, like myself. If you have a story about children, I want you to read it to us, because you read in such a catchy, elocution style, you know," said Cathey, emphasizing the last few words in a pompous way.

Paul sanctioned Cathey's request, and then walked off in an elegant way.

"But pictures are better than stories, specially stories for very little folks, and I'm getting real huffy to know something about Van Dyck, where he lived, when he lived, and what pictures he painted," spoke Bertha, elevating her brow, as if straining her imagination in advance of the treat; then she leaned on the governess' lap, and looked appealingly into her face. Jealous little Cathey soon possessed the other side, and caressed her teacher tenderly, while Paul pranced about the room.

"Yes, some pictures are better than some stories," assented Miss Claire, as well as the embraces and fondling of the two girls would allow. She consulted her watch again, adding: "Then I will harmonize your differences in this way: There is sufficient time to meet Bertha's request, by giving a short sketch of Van Dyck's life. So much time, more than we have to spare, will be required for the reading of the story, but I will read it this evening or tomorrow. Will that do, my pet?" as she pressed the little hand that caressed her cheeks.

"Yes'mam; that'll do, if I just can't get my story now," consented Cathey, readily, for, though frequently stubborn and self-willed, she invariably yielded to the judgment of others, when once convinced of error herself.

"That's a darling," she replied, eulogistically, then proceeded: "I can give only a very brief sketch of the painter's life, and must hurry about

that. Van Dyck was a very interesting character. He was born at Antwerp, Belgium, in 1599. Very little is known of his pedigree, except that his grandfather, a silk manufacturer, seemed to possess considerable wealth, and was of good influence. His father was a trader of good standing in the community in which he lived, and the painter was the seventh of twelve children. At ten years of age he was apprenticed to Henry Van Balen, a painter of beautiful pictures. In that apprenticeship the boy doubtless acquired many grand conceptions for his future work. After beginning to paint in earnest, he must have been an incessant worker, for, before he was fourteen years old, he was working independently, with pupils of his own. History says that his pictures were greatly valued by some artists, even at that youthful age. In 1620 he was working with Rubens, the greatest of contemporary painters. His intimate touch with Rubens' masterpieces possibly account for the remarkably glowing tints of Van Dyck's earliest paintings, and yet strong individuality is conspicuous in all his work. It is said that but few other painters so richly endowed their models with distinction of feature and elegance. For that reason he was eagerly patronized by the aristocracy. He painted the portraits of kings, queens, and many other royal personages.

"The great value of his Samson and Delilah was shown by its now being in the British galery.

Another one of his great pictures is that of Francis Duquensnay, the famous sculptor, belonging to the king of the Belgians. Those who know and understand his work best, all acknowledge that his finest works are religious subjects or portraits, such as the "Adoration of the Shepherds,' the 'Deposition,' the 'Martyrdom of St. Peter,' the 'Crowning with Thorns,' the "Betrayal of Christ,' and. the 'Crucifixion.' His 'Crucifixion,' now in Mechlin, is considered one of the finest pictures in the world.

"He did much work in London, and other England cities. He also worked in distant cities of France, Sicily, Holland, and Italy; and it was said that no master ever occupied a higher position among the most celebrated representatives of Italian art. Later in life he shared with Rubens, in England, the official title of Court Painter, and, in 1632, he received the honor of Knighthood. Somewhere near 1635 he married Lady Mary Ruthven, the daughter of Sir Patrice. Ruthven. In 1641 he died at Blackfriars, and in his death, the world lost one of the most brilliant figures in all the realms of art."

"And he died!" a sad cadence ended the story, which had thrilled Bertha from the beginning. But all must die; that is one of the most important epochs in every life, wether good or bad; so, after a few moments serious meditation over those two little words, "he died," she said, quite pensively: "Of course, he died; all must die."

Miss Claire cast a searching look at her.

Bertha shrugged her shoulders, seriously, and added: "But it seemed to me that he died too soon; that was my bother. I thought that he ought to have lived to be one hundred years old. I don't believe in such bosh as a man's being old at sixty. Wasn't he a grand painter, though? Oh, that I could paint as he did! Last night, when mother was reading the 14th chapter of St. John, as she came to the verse, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments,' I drew a mind-picture of Christ that is yet vivid in my memory, and, if I could paint like Van Dyck, I know that I could reproduce my thought-picture on canvass."

"But I didn't enjoy hearing about Vain Dick, not the least little bit," Cathey promptly explained, peremptorily. "He lived too far away, too long ago, and was so high in the sky that he seems like a myth to me. I want a real children's story, about children in our own land, for I like our own country and our own folks the best."

"I do, too. Hurrah for our own country!" subjoined Paul, in earnest tones.

"Blessed little patriots!" observed the governess, in affective tones.

"Now Cathey, you and Paul don't know what is superior and exalted. You haven't yet caught the secret of the most exquisite tints of life," spoke Bertha, in reprovingly sympathetic tones. "Painting is one of the greatest of talents, the most exalted one of all I do believe in my soul.

I'd like to have the biology of every painter of beautiful pictures."

Paul and Cathey thought that "sister" had made a wonderful display of wisdom, but Miss Claire smiled quite copiously at "biology," and corrected: "You mean biography, dear."

"Thank you; I knew the word, but thoughtlessly misplaced it for the first one that entered my mind," apologized Bertha, with a beaming smile. "I do so wish that I could see all the beautiful pictures that Van Dyck ever painted. If I had such talent as his, I'd bring beauty and grandeur out of every crag and rock on this hillside."

"You must make your mind a receptacle for the grandeur and beauty, until you can paint. I'm truly glad that you admire one of my favorite painters, and regret very much that Paul and Cathey cannot appreciate his great work for the world. But, during the afternoon intermission, I will read, 'At the Picnic' for them, a story—"

"Oh! Oh! That is just what I want," cried Paul, distractedly, dancing round the room as briskly as a gray mouse. Cathey soon followed, chasing him in and out, and round and round, until they were as exhausted and breathless as two gray-hounds, after a three days' rant with Bruin.

AT THE PICNIC.

"Oh. motherdy, you don't know what Miss Mary and the superintendent said today? We are just as happy as we can be, Joe and I. We ran all the way from Sunday school to tell you about it," cried Annie, vehemently, as she rushed through the door and sank into an easy rocker, completely exhausted from the long run. A mere glance revealed how intensely red and purple-spotted her face was.

From the time the children started to Sunday school that morning, up to a few minutes ago, Mrs. Duncan poured over some of the most impressive chapters in "Night Scenes of the Bible." She was at the last chapter, "No Night in Heaven." and came to the verse:

> "No dreadful hour
> Of mental darkness or the tempter's power;
> Across whose skies no envious cloud shall roll
> To dim the sunlight of the raptured soul,"

when she paused to meditate, that the wings of faith might have the utmost freedom for a short time; and it was in the finale of this pause that she remembered Joe's last request that morning: "Please, mother, don't forget to find our game to-

day." The game was "The Alphabetical Arrangement of the Bible Kings and Queens," which, to the chagrin and discomfort of the children, was misplaced several weeks ago. Immediately, she began a search for it, but when the cheery voice of her daughter broke into the sacred stillness of the room, her entire attention was turned from the object of that search to the spotted face.

"Oh, dear! What a face! Didn't you know, Annie, that it was most imprudent for you to run so? I am certainly surprised that you were so thoughtless. Here, bathe your face with this," as she brought a cooling solution, a home-pathologic liniment," for bruises or abused complexions, concocted especially for such emergencies as the present one; then she added: "Didn't you know, dear, that it is ruinous to the complexion to get so hot? The red spots will be replaced by great brown ones, if you persist in acting so unwisely. Please remember this, and don't let me hand, and stopped to pluck it out."

This last injunction had its effect, for Annie was exceedingly thoughtful of her pearly complexion, the white and velvety beauty of which had been so lavishly commented upon by her associates, and usually the utmost precautions were used in an endeavor to keep it faultless; not to incite praise, but to show appreciation of a beautiful gift. Though she often contrasted her own clear complexion with that of others, who were

made to suffer immensely by the comparison, there was very little of actual vanity about Annie. While other children only thought of having a good time, she considered it a most essential element of any good time to take care of any beautiful gift that had been entrusted to her care. She had been taught this by a wise and considerate mother, until she believed that all lovely and useful gifts were to be strictly guarded—this was the height and depth of her vanity; consequently if some excitable circumstance caused an occasional violation of this rule, a few words of caution from a most discreet and painstaking mother was sufficient to whet her memory and place it in authority again.

"Where is Joe? Did he break down and stop on the way? He doubtless needs attention, also," said Mrs. Duncan, with a sparkle of uneasiness in her countenance, as soon as her excitement about Annie's condition had been quelled.

"He didn't run very much, motherdy. For a while he kept before me, until we reached the big spring, where he got an ugly nettle in his hand and stopped to pluck it out."

"And you didn't offer to assist him? Why, Annie, were you so thoughtless as to treat Joe that way? Is my little daughter forgetting all her beautiful lessons of helpfulness and turning selfish? How sad! How sad!"

The tones were so tender, so radiantly pathetic, that Annie's heart was instantly touched, and

her voice quivered most perceptibly as she replied: "But, motherdy, he told me to come; he did truly! He was so anxious for you to hear, and—and— I wanted to stay and help him, and then I wanted to come and tell you the good news, too, because—because, we were so indeed glad."

Mrs. Duncan smiled quite copiously at Annie's confused hilarity. She talked so rapidly and so enthusiastically, that she was compelled to gasp for a good breath at the end of the last sentence.

"My face isn't a bit hot now," she laughed, brushing her hands over her cheeks.

At this juncture Master Joe made his appearance, shambling along at a moderate gait, with his hat tilted airily to one side and he was whistling "My Old Kentucky Home" more accurately and artistically than he was ever known to whistle anything before. As he stood in the doorway, bowing and smiling and doffing his hat, he looked at his mother in a quizzical and searching way, as if trying to ascertain how much the good news had affected her.

"Did you succeed in picking out the nettle, son?" queried his mother, the moment he entered the room.

"No'mam, I didn't get it out, but it doesn't hurt the least little bit now. It got too deep in the skin to be got at. It quit a hurtin' anyway; so I let it alone. I don't care for much of a hurt, a spasodic hurt, noway, mother, since we are to have such a jolly old time next Tuesday."

Joe's not caring "for much of a hurt" tickled Annie immensely, and Mrs. Duncan smiled effusively at his "spasodic" for "spasmodic," as she quietly responded: "You mean that you don't care for a little spasmodic hurt, dear; that's right. But the nettle must come out, Joe; it may make an ugly wound by remaining there. Then you won't have such a jolly time next Tuesday, after all. An old proverb says, 'A stitch in time saves nine,' and I have found it to be true. Grievous difficulties are frequently prevented by a strict adherence to the rule."

While uttering these words, she went for a needle and was soon delving, though cautiously, for the mischievous nettle, which had gone so very, very deep that the operation proved to be a most painful one; so painful was it that she was compelled, finally, to relinguish the task altogether. Then she applied a drawing plaster to the wound, the effect of which was so quick and spontaneous that she also censured herself for not resorting to that method of treatment sooner. That done, Annie jumped up briskly, like a bounding ball, as though her body was gum-elastic, and exclaimed, in a jolly way: "Oh, motherdy, you have been so bothered about Joe and me, that you haven't asked a single question about our happy fete next Tuesday."

Joe wondered if Annie had kept the secret all this time. Had he known that, he could have come from the spring much quicker.

"There has been no time to ask anything," said the mother.

"But the time always comes to tell a thing," began Annie, humorously; "so here I go: But Miss Mary told it in such a cute way at Sunday school this morning that I want to relate it just as she did, only I cannot borrow her rich, musical voice, which seems to keep correct time to everything she says. Jennie Brown could do it, if she was here, for she can imitate Miss Mary's voice to a 'T.' Everyone says she can."

While making the above speech, a mild ecstacy, evidencing a happy anticipation, was plainly visible in Annie's countenance and voice; then going behind a little mahogany table, she took a book in one hand, laid the other on the table in an elegant way and went on, excitedly: "This is the very way she said it, when—"

"That's it, to a 'T,'" ejaculated Joe, clapping his hands gleefully. "That's just the way she stood, a book in one hand and the other on the table. And she smiled, too, mother, just as Annie is smiling now." And Joe cheered three times for Miss Mary, only as a boy can cheer.

"Now you bothered me, Joe. What did you do it for?" cried Annie, petulantly. She was thoughtful for a moment and then continued: "Listen, motherdy, here is what she said: 'You have all attended our school so regularly this year, have had such good lessons, and have deported yourselves so nicely, that we are going to

give you an all-day outing soon, a jolly good time, at Chestnut grove, where we've had so many enjoyable fetes. We will start as early as possible next Tuesday morning, before the dew dries from the grass and flowers; and when we get there, we will sketch, play, swing, eat our lunch—oh, just anything the occasion may demand.' And mother, you never saw such pleased—"

"I do say, mother, they are almost the very words that Miss Mary used."

"They *are* the words," chirped Annie, and her mother, knowing the child's remarkable memory, gave full credence to her words. "You bothered me again, Joe," cried Annie.

"But I aim to help tell it, Miss. Mother, Miss Mary ended by crossing her hands and looking at us, just as Annie is doing now," declared Joe vehemently, with dilated eyes; then, for sheer joy, he grasped his mother's hand and pressed it tightly to his lips.

Annie gulped down her petulance and said: "Isn't it grand, mother? And wasn't Miss Mary just too good to us? Oh, we'll have such a gay, lovable time in the dear old woods! I do so enjoy gathering wild flowers, to make such dainty wreathes with, you know; and to make a royal crown of the wreathes when we play May Queen. It is such jolly fun. I know who will be the queen this year—Patsey Mason, because everyone says she has such queenly ways. She is, indeed,

the most blooming picture of loveliness in our school."

Annie paused for a good breath and then continued: "Do you know, motherdy, that we are to take our lunch with us? We are to spread our spotless cloths on the ground, with pies and cakes and chocolates, and eat right in the sweet old woods. Oh, grandee! Isn't it just too grand to think about?" catching her mother's hand and pressing it to her lips, just as Joe had done. She smothered her last words here, while happy tears splashed over her blooming cheeks. She possessed a sweet, impulsive little nature, that ebbed and flowed with tears of gratitude at any thoughts of great kindness.

"It will, indeed, be very nice," assented her mother, bending one of her charmingly approving smiles upon her lovely daughter. She had been standing very quietly near Annie all the while the latter was speaking, but now she sank into an easy chair near the table and proceeded with her instruction: "And I am so glad that my little boy and girl can justly appreciate such good times, and always manifest a true gratefulness for every kindness shown them. It is just and right to enjoy good and beautiful things, to get out among the lovely objects of nature; but, my darlings, you must not forget one thing, the one thing of untold value in the promotion of your own happiness, as well as that of others, and that one thing is. you must help those who have

no means of helping themselves. There are many, doubtless, who would like to attend this picnic, but are unable to make the necessary preparation for it. Every family should take enough lunch for at least five others, and then see that they have a suitable way to go. Let none who wish to go be deprived of the benefits and pleasures of the occasion. It is selfish and rude to plan for self alone, without a wish or plan for the happiness of others. This occasion is an opportune time for everyone to prove that self is not first and last."

The next morning, as Mrs. Duncan was making out some necessary orders for the cook, Annie, still greatly enthused over the excitement of the previous day, glided briskly into the kitchen and in a high-toned, ardent voice, asked: "Mother, will—will you give me 'mission to do just anything I want to to-day, without asking any questions about my 'tentions?"

"You mean 'permission' and 'intention,' darling."

After this correction, Mrs. Duncan paused a moment, apparently in a most thoughtful mood, for she was unaccustomed to promising anything rashly or blindly; but after a careful scrutiny of the sweet, upturned face before her, with its sparkling countenance glowing with innocence and loveliness, she felt so sure that the child would not do a wrong, that she had no desire to do a wrong, that she responded quiescently, "Yes,

if my darling will be sure that she is doing the right thing."

"Oh, I will do that; indeed I will," with a rippling, sunny laugh. "I'll not do a thing that'll make me sorry afterward." Turning to leave the kitchen, she added: "Oh, I'm just as fleet and glib as a mocking bird this morning, just radiantly jub'rous—that's what Cousin Bess always says —and I must do something to make someone else that way today."

Mrs. Duncan, with a heart full of gladness, smiled lavishly and began to sing:

"The day is bringing gladness."

Annie glided out briskly, almost as noiselessly as a young kitten, but with a head chuck full of pleasing plans to be carried into execution during the day. Reaching her own cosy little sanctum on the second floor, which, because of the wall paper and furnishings, was always bright and sunny, she gathered up her gloves, parasol and walking hat, in order to have them handy when ready to start; then she finished her usual preparations for appearing decently and in order at the breakfast table.

Breakfast over, full of spirit and gayety, she started on her self-appointed errand. The journey was of small moment, for it was just across an old sage field, was the home of the widow Berry, and her lowly cottage could be plainly seen from Annie's home. In a few moments she was lifting the gate latch, so rapidly had she

walked. No sooner had she entered the dining room, into which she had been most cordially invited—they were all at the breakfast table—than her mission was divulged, timidly: "Our Sunday school's going to Chestnut grove tomorrow, to have an all-day picnic, and I've come to invite, not one, but every one of you, to go with us."

For severel minutes a deathly silence prevailed, during which time they stared at each other in a most inquiring way, a way that seemed very funny to Annie; but the fact of the business was, it had come so suddenly and so unexpectedly, this invitation to a Sunday school picnic, that it seemed almost incredible, they thought to themselves, too strange to be true. Why, they had never been invited to a picnic nor anything else, and this first invitation was almost like an electric shock to Mrs. Berry and the children. Since Mr. Berry's death, their lot had been a most trying and tedious one, with nothing but work, work, work, from Monday morning until Saturday night. Then, with all their work, it had been a long time since they had been blessed with suitable clothes to wear anywhere, and more especially to a picnic. Since their advent into the community, they had seemed so reserved and home-staying, so bent on living alone, that no one had yet thought of inviting them to church, even; and now—strange indeed it was, that they had received an invitation to a Sunday school picnic.

Annie saw great tears well up in the mother's

eyes, as they swept over the little group assembled around the table, four girls, poorly clad, with great freckles conspicuous on all their faces, and she, with her wonderful girl intuition, quickly surmised the meaning of that searching, contemplative look on Mrs. Berry's face. The prodigious silence was broken by the eldest daughter, who said: "I don't see but what we might go, Ma. It's the first invitation we ever had to a picnic, and like as not it'll be the last. Let me see," as she played a discordant tune with her knife and fork, "this is Monday morning, and the sun is but little better than up. I can shore wash and iron our Sunday clothes to-day; so we needn't be put out 'bout that."

"Like as not it'll be best. None of you have soiled the ribbons your aunt sent you," quietly concurred Mrs. Berry, choking back the tears. She reached for a second toast, and as a little shadow gathered over her brow, added: "But Tom and Kate hasn't got no shoes."

"That needn't hinder at all. Some of the small boys and girls nearly always go barefoot; they did last year, just for the fun of it, you see," assured Annie, intensely gratified at this much evidence of the progress of her venture. Then observing a continuance of that bewildered look on Mrs. Berry's face, she proceeded to enlighten her further: "And you needn't mind about fixing any lunch, either. The Sunday school will furnish enough for all who want to go. Mother's

going to carry enough for five others, beside ourselves, and you all can eat with us. There'll be just a plenty."

Judging by the sudden rift of that great cloud from the woman's brow, one less skilled than Annie in the art of judging by outward appearances would have thought that the "lunch idea" was the chief cause of her undecidedness from the start, and that was certainly no unworthy idea, in her case, at least. Annie had a pretty good understanding of such conditions herself, for on such occasions as the present one, she had often heard her mother say: "What shall I take," when the larder was filled with a great variety of good things, then how much more difficult the task of decision by this poor widow, who found it absolutely necessary to practice the strictest economy at all times.

But Annie's last suggestion settled the matter equitably, and they promised to be at the designated place on time the next morning.

Tuesday morning dawned bright and beautiful, with a luminous sunshine over all nature's fair face; not the smallest particle of cloud was visible overhead, and the soft, murmuring breezes indicated a perfect day. Everything seemed on the topmost pinnacle of festivity, not only human beings, but the birds also, whose thrilling and satiric notes sent a deeper joy to the hearts of the children; and the herds of cattle or flocks of bleating lambs, grazing leisurely on the grassy

lots and meadows, seemed intensely grateful for the beautiful day and for the abundance around them; while the domestic fowls, crowing and cackling and prancing about, seemed to know something of the wondrous beauty of the entrancing day.

The picnicers had planned to go to Chestnut grove on hay wagons, and they were all to meet at White's cross roads, only a short distance from the Duncan residence, between the village and the picnic ground, half a mile from the former place. Four wagons, well-loaded with sween-scented hay, and to the great surprise of the committee on arrangements, three surreys and a dozen horse-back riders, assembled at the cross roads bright and early, for it was necessary to start early in order to enjoy the full day. The surreys were filled to their utmost capacity, mostly with elderly people; a few were on the wagons when they arrived and numerous pedestrians arrived simultaneously with the vehicles. The last equippage to arrive contained two young ladies, Misses Vaughn and Semple, with *Ivanhoe, Vanity Fair, Marble Faun* and some of the latest magazines—going a pleasure seeking by reading during the day, so it was supposed. With a laugh and a wave of the hand, they swept past the others and were soon lost in the dense foliage of the distant woodlands.

Presently Miss Mary rose up, Miss Mary, the goddess of inventions and of all grand fetes for

the children, so they thought. At seeing their charming leader, some of the boys took off their hats, while the girls waved their handkerchiefs animatedly above their heads. She cast one of her radiant, sunny smiles upon them, then glided from her lofty perch on the hay, in order to get them properly arranged; but she found this to be a difficult task, for the whole scene reminded her of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. All glibbed at once, and it was almost impossible to understand any of them; neither could she make them understand her; so it was really necessary to grasp each one by the arm and urge him to hie away to the top of the wagon. This method, even, was tedious and required much patience, for some of the boys, full of fun and frolic, would jump, squeak, tumble summersaults, roll off on the other side and come rushing around with a look of feigned innocence on their faces, to try it again. Miss Mary was most patient with the frolic, until patience ceased to be a virtue, and then, in most authoritative tones, she firmly demanded of them a strict obedience, to hasten to their places on the hay and to be more orderly about it. This command was instantly sanctioned by Deacon Johnson, who had come purposely to help keep order among the mischievous boys, and to be of use generally.

"I thought this was to be a day of do-as-you-please-pranks and carousals of all kinds," shriek-

ed Jai Smythe, as he tumbled into his place on the hay.

"If I can't be allowed to skimp and giggle and bumble, I'll go back home," growled Timothy Morris irasibly, as he slided off the hay.

"We would be greatly disappointed not to have you go with us, Timothy. We meant for all the boys to enjoy this day by having a good time at the picnic," said Miss Mary.

"And yet you're carousing about our good time quicker'n nothing. Bah! Goody-goody, time indeed! Come, Bob, and let's go home. I'm tired of this crazy crowd already."

"Stop your mouthing, Timothy Morris! Can't you show respect to a lady? The Book says there's a time for all things; a time to sing, a time to play and a time to mourn—everything in it's time; so the Book says, and I reckon it knows. Chestnut grove is the place and time for play and bummering, as you say, but we'll never get there unless you and others act more gentlemanly," spoke Jai Smythe from the top of the hay wagon.

This little argument had more power in silencing the confusion of tongues and hilarity than the unmost persuasion of their leader; it was soon over, however, for Timothy had found his little brother and was doggedly dragging him from the scene against his will.

"We can do well enough without Tim, but I'm sorry for the young'un. It seems the joy of fate to have some sneak spoil every venture for some

one," said one of the big boys on the wagon, with eyes set on the retreating forms of the two boys.

"Let us deal kindly with the erring," responded Deacon Johnson, with discretion; "but now that you all see how silly it is to act cruelly or to dodge duty, we will surely have no repetition of the caper to-day. When Timothy's passion cools down and he sees himself as he really is, he will doubtless be ashamed of this misdemeanor."

Timothy was naturally a stubborn boy, who had never tried to control his fiery temper in a Christian way; and his churlishness on this occasion, for some of the little ones, threw a damper over the beautiful prospects of the day.

Deacon Johnson's words were scarcely off his tongue when another little imp appeared on the scene to make a clown of himself. His intentions with regard to the bow and arrow in his hands were questioned, and he replied, somewhat ferociously: "Shoot birds, of course! What else do you suppose? I aim for this day to count for something. I'm going to shoot five birds, that I am; get ten cents a piece for them, that I am; and be fifty cents richer in my pockets tonight, that I will," chirped Will Kenedy, in most audacious tones.

"But you shouldn't shoot the birds. They're sweet, innocent creatures, made to help fill the world with music and good cheer. Just listen to their gay songs now; would you murder the

makers of such music?" asked Miss Mary, with a pathetic look that pleaded earnestly for the innocent birds.

"I don't see as there's anything sweet about their songs. They're sour as wormwood to me, case birds are wicked, thieving creatures that ought to be killed. As soon as you turn your back on them, they're ready to pick up your garden seeds, or anything else they can get their wicked beaks to."

"It's useless to moralize a heartless boy," interrupted Carl Nance, the young ornithologist, and a dear lover of birds he was, ever ready to defend them against the deadly weapons of his pitiless friends.

"We'll never get to Chestnut grove at this rate," cried a group of girls who were getting impatient and exceedingly anxious to be on the way.

This interruption was of short duration, also, for Carl's mother had pushed her way through the crowd, and was tenderly remonstrating with the stubborn boy. As a result of her entreaty, the bow and arrow were left behind, though it was evident that the boy did it against his will—that it was a forced obedience.

Then there was a precipitous hurrying and skurrying, as sprightly boys and girls scrambled to the places assigned them, and such chattering and laughing and commingling of musical voices was never heard. For absolute safety, the little

tots were put in the wagons, with a circle of big boys and girls around them, and the bird-like voices of those blessed little cherubs, as they laughingly prattled about the good time they were having, were intensely amusing to every listener. They were all getting quiet and happy again, all seeming merry as a marriage bell, and everyone perfectly satisfied with the position assigned him or her, until just two little girls were left on the ground. One of them, with an ugly pout on her rosy lips, suffered herself to be placed in the midst of the Berry children, who had been snugly installed in the rear of one of the wagons, and then just one remained on the ground.

"Bounce up, Ninta," urged Miss Mary, as she took the child's arm to assist her on the wagon.

"I don't want to," whimpered Ninta, peevishly.

"Why not, darling?" she interceded, without the least inkling of the true cause of the child's objection.

"They're too freckle-faced," innocently pleaded the child, as a funny little twist of the rosebud mouth expressed more fully than her words her extreme dislike of freckles; but when one of the boys laughed and called her baby, she hid her face in her apron and cried outright: "I'll not ride with 'em; they're too tacky; they're too—"

"Let me over there, please, Miss Mary. I'll ride with them," said Annie's clear, clarion voice,

which was almost drowned by outbursts of approval.

"Five cheers for Annie," said a very sensible young man, waving his hat in admiration; then Deacon Johnson, almost of grenadier height, rose above the others, took off his hat and bowed most gallantly to the gracious Annie. He, as well as Miss Mary, had scrupulously advised the pupils more than once to exert themselves in an effort to make everyone happy on this occasion—this memorable day set apart for the joy and betterment of all their lives; and it seemed that Annie was going to carry off the prize.

Annie seemed to enjoy the honors showered upon her, more, perhaps, because she felt conscious of having done the right thing. She made another hit, too, after the grand procession began to move off, by making a remark that was most pleasing to those who heard it: "This dress is pretty, and it is made quite nicely," as she touched the simple five-cent muslin of the girl beside her. This expression was not founded on deception either, merely a wish to please, whether right or not, for Annie really thought that the blood-drop spangles in the white gown were exquisite, and the dress had been finished off quite artistically, too, though simple enough. The girl's appreciation of the remark was shown by a smile that was touching because of its exceeding rareness. Her rough hands were bare, her hat yellowed by age, but Annie pretended not to notice

them at all; in fact, the very cream of courtesy was exhibited in all she did and said.

On reaching a woodland road, where perfect quietness reigned, and all distant objects were cut off by the thick foliage, Deacon Johnson struck up a familiar tune, in which he was soon joined by at least fifty well trained voices, all singing melodiously: "Raise the Royal Banner." The music was good and pleasant to hear, but they wanted something more indicative of the joyousness of their hearts, for they were every one brimful of sweetest gratitude. In their hearts were ringing praises to the very atmosphere, the sunshine, the heavens, the Creator; so they wanted a song more in keeping with the infinite delights of their hearts. It was Deacon Johnson that experienced the deepest glow, and he started out with one of their Sunday school songs:

WHY PRAISE.

Sing praises this day to our God,
For the gift of his priceless word,
For the Spirit's radiant light,
Leading from doubt's gloomy night;
Praise, oh praise, this mighty One,
For the wonderful works He's done.

Praise the Lord deep in thy heart,
In his salvation for thy part,
For from the miry depths of sin,
His mercy reached and took thee in;
Then praise, oh praise, with mind and soul,
The gracious God who made thee whole.

Praise tho' sorrows come thy way,
Marring pleasures of the day,

For he will quickly give thee aid,
When on him thy faith is staid;
Praise, oh praise, the Lord on high,
For his help is ever nigh.

Praise, oh praise, the Father above,
For his wonderful gift of love,
That he designs thy soul to meet,
In seasons of communion sweet ;
Praise, oh praise, this heavenly Friend,
Praise, oh praise him, 'til the end.

Then praise the Lord with sweetest might,
When things go wrong or when right,
For his help to the children of men,
Praise him with voice and with pen ;
Praise, oh praise, this mighty One,
For the wonderful works He's done.

The leader of this song, when the echo of the last word had died away, fell to contemplating some of the visible wonders created by the mighty Hand, until his own sentiments grew more and more like unto that which inspired the song.

More hearts than his were softened by the grand sentiments of the song. All the boys and girls felt the beauty of it, and it seemed that every feathered songster in the great woodland took up the notes where they were left off, and were pouring forth such ranting joyousness that every heart was instantly touched.

"I expect to give that bird-killer some good advice, something to think about, before this day is over," said a young lady with an easel, a palette and a box of colors.

"I wish you would," said a close sympathizer.

For awhile the utmost stillness ensued, after which happy and entertaining conversation flowed freely and smoothly, in which the little tots were frequently as deeply interested as the older ones, and they clappeed their little hands and cried for sheer joy every time they saw a frightened rabbit or a stray dog run across the road, or when a bird flew just over their heads. Things to which they had always been accustomed were novelties now. The shrubs and trees were objects of the greatest interest. All the fine scenery along the way, to the left and to the right, was as fresh, picturesque and captivating as though they were beholding it for the first time. A distant hill, vast fields of wheat with billowy waves in the morning's soft breeze, wild flowers by the roadside, or flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, were scenes that brought, invariably, glad exclamations from praising lips and appreciative hearts; and when they had reached the top of a jaunty, rugged hill, which had required ten minutes to ascend, the valley below, with a magnificent, crystal stream of water in the midst of it, was so novel and entrancing that, for the gratification of a young lady in the foremost wagon, the procession stopped that she might have an opportunity to use her kodak on the wonderful scene.

Such a thing had been done before, in fact, many times before, for Chestnut grove had been a cherished spot for the picnicers for the last several years, but that valley was a new and most

interesting attraction each time they passed that way.

Some of the children took immediate advantage of this pause of the vehicles, capered to the ground and rushed, wild with delight and excitement, to a wild rose bush on the side of the road and were soon stripping it of its beauty and glory; but the petals fluttered to the ground as fast as the roses were culled, and then they were mimiced and teased most comically by the big boys on the wagons, until a spirit of resentment moved them to gather up handsfull of sand and gravels, which would have been tossed at their heads instantly had not Deacon Johnson interposed by saying: "That isn't the best way to get even, children; just let them know that you don't care at all, and then they will get ashamed of themselves and quit teasing."

"We don't care; we don't! Ya! Ya! Ya!" shouted a little curly head, in a most tantalizing way.

The procession was soon ready to start, and in order not to be left they had to shamble back quite hurriedly. During the remainder of the journey they were just as happy and anticipating as if they had started on a European tour to see some of the wonders of the world. They were mostly town children, with whom such treats as riding through the country were very infrequent, and they felt like gay birds fresh out of the cage, ready to flap their wings and enjoy freedom to

the utmost. The very atmosphere seemed sweeter and more fascinating than they had ever felt it; the birds caroled the sweetest songs they had ever heard them sing, and the quivering of the leaves in the morning's breeze was both beauty any music to their ears.

Reaching Chestnut grove, the high-spirited, frolicsome children had not patience to be assisted from the wagons, but like mimicing monkeys, tumbled heedlessly into the grass, danced, capered and jumped energetically, like so many wild animals. As though a child again himself, Deacon Johnson experienced deep satisfaction in the bouyant delight of the young people, and Miss Mary felt so intensely grateful for the moment that she could have taken them all in her arms at one huge clasp. For several minutes they were allowed to tramp over the ground at leisure, to laugh and chatter and "to rest themselves after the long ride," so Deacon Johnson said; but a mild-faced Madonno admitted that, in her opinion, "it was a queer way to rest."

Misses Vaughn and Semple were the first objects that greeted their eyes, when they had reached the picnic ground; they were on a fallen tree, in a dense shade, and were discussing that part of Vanity Fair where Amelia was so blind that she could not see the wonderful worth and love of the man who thought of her by day, and dreamed of her by night.

Very soon they were called to order, just be-

fore the formal address by Deacon Johnson. The festivals were invariably opened up with a formal address. They were arranged in a semi-circle around a most picturesque arbor, made of pine-branches, and splendidly decorated with wild roses, fern, and tiger-lillies; it was made especially for the speaker's rostrum, for the right royal architects and decorators had said: "We want to make the stand as attractive as possible; that will help to inspire and eloquize the speech;" whereupon another one added: "And keep the young'uns from hearing what is said." Whatever the result, it was indeed a most magnificent scene, and well deserving of every compliment it received during that blessed, never-to-be-forgotten day.

A few moments previous to the commencement of the address, Annie observed a little group of five, honorly dressed and isolat-looking, entirely separated from the rest, as though they thought it would be sacrilege for them to claim any part in the festivities of the occasion. She touched her mother's arm lightly, and whispered: "See, mother! That little Miss Scrimper hurt their feelings, and made them think they are too tacky to stay with the rest. May I bring them up among us?"

"Yes, darling; but Mrs. Berry could not have cared for a child's prattle, I know. But I will go with you," and off they started, Mrs. Duncan

feeling truly grateful that her young daughter possessed such a philanthropic spirit.

Deacon Johnson, whose eyes were ever on the alert, was a silent witness to the touching incident, and from it stored away some rich thoughts to help decorate his speech, presently. As he stood before the audience, tall, and with a most observant countenance, utter silence prevailed; even the smallest of the children seemed to realize the grand importance of the occasion, and were most omniously silent. Following are a few of the most striking paragraphs from his address:

"Possibly some of you have not yet thought why we came to this far-off, woody retreat to have a good time. One reason why we came here is because it is one of the most delightful places in the whole country, with some of the most unique and artistic scenery to be found between this and the next state. We wanted every one of you to see this, and to cultivate a love for it. We want you to learn to appreciate the beautiful things in the beautiful world in which you live, to learn to read the open book of nature, to admire its wonders, its mysteries, its loveliness. The cultivation of this nature is of inexpressible value in the training of your minds; it helps to invigorate and intensify your imagination; it gives you an exquisite and finished love for the most artistic things, without which mental culture loses half its beauty and value. Consider

the lillies of the field—"Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' That is indeed a mighty eulogy on the beauty of the lilly, for Solomon, as King, was clothed with the finest of raiment. As the Bible describes the lilly, so is every lovely object of nature, which helps to adorn this magnificent world—the exceeding grandeur of mountain-peaks, the silvery-leaved trees, the rippling streams of crystal waters, the wonderful, billowy ocean, the grass that makes a velvety, emerald carpet over the entire earth, the brilliant sunshine that lights up the whole—what beauty can be compared to all this Daily do you see the hand of the great Creator in it all, and as you, by constant and loving cultivation, bring your natures to harmonize with this beauty around you, do you realize the magnitude of the Fatherly care that framed it all for your joy and benefit."

"The recreation and inspiration you derive from these fetes are helpful in more ways than one. It is right to work, to be energetic in work, for idleness is profane, and they who attempt to live idle lives wreck their happiness and hope of success in this world. They are of no benefit to themselves, or to any one else. Those who work are the ones who are a blessing to this world—keep that in mind, every one of you. You grow strong by work, strong bodily, strong mentally, and strong morally, if your energies are bent in that direction; then, too, when you work and

save, you are never without means for philanthropic purposes. But, however industrious you may be, and however much you may be accumulating by your work, it is wise to stop occasionally for a season of rest and recreation, to have a good time generally, just as we are having today. It rests your nerves to play a little sometimes, to engage in fun and frolic; it strengthens you for the continuance of labor, makes better men and women of you, because, when resting and observing, you have the broadest occasions to drink in the beauties around you, and to observe the people whose innate charms you had been too busy to notice. Then, with your nerves all toned up, your hearts made more bouyant by the joy that came into them, and every fiber of your being feeling fresher and more vigorous, you re-enter your duties with increased faith in the goal for which you started out.

"But, remember this, my dear boys and girls, if you seek the highest enjoyment for self alone, merely to gratify some selfish whim or motive, you will certainly be defeated in your purpose. Pure, sweet happiness makes not its abode in selfish hearts, but ten-fold is added to your own when you share with others. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Even so far as the joyous reaction upon your own heart is concerned, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Joy also comes more in sharing with the real desti-

tute than in sharing with those equally equipped with yourselves. Some of you hitched up your hay-wagons this morning—what for? not because you really needed them yourselves, but to give those a chance who had no way of conveyance to this lovely place, and I'll venture to say that the boys and girls who were the most interested in that class, who invited them to come, and who are willing to make some sacrifices for their pleasure and comfort during the day, are the ones who are going back home with the richest rewards. 'A friend in need is a friend indeed,' so runs the proverb. Our Saviour, our Master, our Guide, went about doing good, and we are commanded to follow in his footsteps. These are the lessons we have tried so assiduously to impress upon you in our Sunday school work."

The speech closed with an earnest appeal to the boys and girls to deport themselves like little men and women that day, to have a kind word for every one, and not to engage in anything to be regretted in moments of silent reflection over the experiences of the day. He was truly grateful for the nice behaviour of the children, and for their unusual attention during his discourse. Some of the wee ones got restless, it is true, and had a playful season among themselves, but diverted the attention of none who really desired to listen. Some of the larger ones, also, eager to be sauntering over the woods, grew restless

at times, nevertheless, they put on a good face, and patiently endured to the end.

"Whao! now for a cotillion!" ejaculated a bad boy, grasping the arm of another, and swinging him about.

"To square!" cried another, shrilly, as he imitated the first one's caper; then, like nimble, frolicsome lambs, a goodly number hastily scampered off in every direction.

Others said that the best time was to be had with the jolly, winsome girls; so they loitered around the rostrum. "Girls can always plan best, and play correctest," said one of the jovial boys; so, together, they gathered blooming forest leaves, cut pine-sprigs, and then searched for the most exquisite of wild flowers to trim "tacky hats," which they intended to make of the leaves and pine-sprigs. "No picnic is complete without tacky hats," they said, laughingly. A prize was offered; the one who procured the most suitable material, and turned off the cutest tacky hat, was to get a prize. Patsey Mason—who Annie selected for queen as soon as she heard about the picnic—offered the prize, and it was really wonderful how every deft little finger did go in and out, for every one wanted the prize. Patsey Mason always awarded such lovely prizes, and every one worked for them. After having gathered up all the materials, so they thought, and were ready to go to work, it was discovered that they had no

pins, and the discovery caused quite a laugh among them. "It would be impossible to make a leaf tacky hat without pins; it would be most like trying to cross the river in a skiff without oars," chirped a thoughtful little lady, funnily, in a high-keyed tone; so they scattered in every direction to hunt for thorn-pins, or hall-sprigs, for either one or both, would answer the purpose, ideally. They found them in abundance, gathered them, sat down to work again, in real earnest, and it would be utterly impossible to remember all the questions propounded in their worky-time; such questions as: "Is this right?" "Will this be a nice contrast?" and "How do you like my tacky hat so far?" It would have been difficult to decide which was the busiest, their little fingers, or their blessed little tongues.

"Estella Vaughn and Callie Semple are the queerest girls; they just read and never play. They don't mind Mr. Johnson, do they?" said one of the busy little milliners, as she arched her lashes, inadvertantly, and got a glympse of the two literary ladies.

"I suppose they think it more important to trim the inside of the head, instead of the outside, as we are doing. Ho! Ho! mine is done."

"And mine!"

"And mine!"

When finished, the hats were all very artistic looking, for tacky-hats, all covered with gay-colored flowers, and with long streamers falling

behind, are always artistic-looking. But, of course, it was only the girls' hats which had streamers. The boys' resembled soldiers' caps, for they had it in their minds to feign war-times, before the day was over, and to show themselves the very bravest of the brave. Having donned their hats and caps, they formed two parallel lines, the girls in a row, the boys facing them, and the many happy faces which looked so saucily from beneath the great bundles of foliage, with their nodding plumes (fern) and their many colored blooms, were lovely beyond words to describe. Three of the largest and most intelligent boys, who had been appointed judges, passed, with critical eyes, between the lines to examine the hats carefully, and then they reported the result of their investigation.

"Annie Duncan has beat the world's greatest genius making a tacky-hat," said one of the judges, decisively.

"She has the strikinest tacky-hat of all," affirmed another one of the judges.

"It's difficult enough for me to tell which has got the banginest tacky-hat," assured the third judge.

"But Annie's won the prize, already," exclaimed several shrill voices in unison.

"And Patsey Mason's tacky-hat tacks up next to Annie's," said two of the judges.

Patsey, at the extreme end of one of the lines, walked briskly to where Annie was, and pinned a

sparkling, silvery star in the front crown of Annie's tacky-hat. She had brought this pin on purpose to offer as a prize for something during the day, and was truly glad of the opportunity to present it to so worthy "a little fairy from Fairyland," she whispered, while fastening the pin to Annie's hat.

"She does look like a fairy now, or beautiful nymph from the woods," said a boy, with cajolery, then hung his head from sheer timidity.

The remark provoked a rippling laugh, and then a tiny little girl added: "She looks like a stately queen, for that star is just like one I saw in a queen's crown—in a picture, I mean."

"Oh, let's play May Queen," said Jai Smyth, fired with enthusiasm at the mere mention of a queen. "Let Annie and Patsey be candidates for the throne, because they had the most skill in making tacky-hats, and they'd know how to dress the finest, you see," he added, in a pompous way.

"But a queen's highest duty is not to dress fine, to make a show, but to be good, and to rule the people with equity and justice and love," said a young man, whose admiration for wisdom was far superior to his love for fun.

"And the same ones shouldn't have the best of everything, either. There should be a wise and just allotment of the prizes," declared democratic little Annie, in most emphatic tones; but her wishes were ruled out altogether, for, they quickly assured her, if it was the unanimous will

of the assemblage to make her their ruler, it would be the highest wisdom and courtesy for her to show respect and confidence in their ability to choose a ruler by accepting the honor, readily, without trying to shirk duty; so they reasoned with her, and she finally relented.

"Patsey is much more deserving," she urged, but the die was cast, and they went about making all necessary arrangements for this new era; for there must be a thorne, a crown and scepter, and oh, so many useful things. Their first work was to make a crown, the material of which was spruce-pine, flowers and the star. It was very high in front, as queens' crowns used to be, with the star pinned on the front center, while the daintiest and most exquisite of the flowers adorned the crown. It was really necessary for the queen to have the most stylish hat, because she must outshine all the rest of them. When finished, they gathered around to pass judgment upon it, and to admire its delicate and original beauty.

"It's simply superb," said one.

"It's brilliant," said another, whose idea of "brilliant" was everything that was lovely and pleasing to the eye; so they all expressed their opinions, using different adjectives, of course, but all meaning pretty much the same thing.

Deacon Johnson and Miss Mary were brought to the scene of enthusiastic admiration, and their opinions coincided with those already given.

"A most deserving head should wear that,"

affirmed Deacon Johnson, "but that would be every blessed little lamb here. If intelligence, beauty, and sweetness of disposition, are the requisities for such a title, any one of you would make a splendid queen. I almost wish that I was a little girl, so I could wear that charming crown."

A laugh went out into that woodland, echoing and re-echoing, until it seemed that a host of unseen fairies, spirits, or angelic beings of some sort, encamped in that lovely place. None laughed with more hearty-goodwill than Annie, and, when the merry voices had becalmed, she proposed crowning him, anyway, as he would make an excellent ruler. One of the boys seconded Annie's motion, but the stately gentleman laughed effusively, and exclaimed: "But queen is feminine, with the sweetest feminine qualities, and I would spoil it all with my gruff judgment, and clumsey, masculine ways."

This eulogy, so characteristic of the speaker, was most amusing to the girls, while the boys pretended not to apprehend his meaning.

They had but little difficulty in procuring a suitable place for a throne, for an immense tree had been recently felled by some woodman's axe, and there was a great trunk, of sufficient height and width, with the neatest immaculate floor; and over this trunk they hastily constructed a canopy of evergreen boughs, and trelised the open spaces around with ivy and other delicate vines, for

which that woodland was so famous. But few minutes were demanded for the construction of "the palatial throne," as they termed it. But much time was expended in eulogizing the rare executive ability of the architicts and artists.

Annie felt that she was not the one to occupy the throne, when it was finished. She had read about queens in story books, and they were such fairy-like creatures, radiantly beautiful, wise, witty, brilliant, or courageous; all of which she was destitute herself, consequently, was undeserving of the honor; yet she allowed the crown to be placed on her head, and when she assended the throne, they cried: "Oh, queen, live forever!"

"Now you have to make a speech, and tell us what to do," said one who expected to be a most obedient subject.

Annie turned quite pale, and said: "You know I can't make a speech. Where is Gretchen, Nicy, and Genie? They're our speech-makers."

"Haven't been seen since we arrived this morning."

"My! my! We need a king. Let's play King and Queen, instead of May Queen," said Harry Benson, so hilarious over the thought that he could not wait until the last matter was fairly settled.

"Yes, two heads are better than one; that is one of the best proverbs of American invention,

and it ought to be respected," said Patsy Mason, proudly.

"And a queen always seems more queenly with a king by her side," put in one of the boys, laughingly.

"But where's the boy that'll suit for a king?" asked doubting Thomas.

"Plenty of them here," was the instant opinion of Deacon Johnson.

"Let's crown Carl Nance King!" cried half a dozen boys almost simultaneously.

"A wise selection," sanctioned Patsey Mason. "He loves the sweet, innocent birds, and a king should always be a lover of the birds. That would be an open indication of his goodness of heart, and everybody would believe that he would treat his subjects right—a lover of birds is always good to everything and everybody." This declaration met with an instant and unanimous applause.

"But it's not so very easy to crown a boy against his will. Unless a boy wills, he won't, you know. Boys are made of sterner stuff than girls, and are not half so pliable. Girls are made of soft stuff, and can be bent this way or that," sweeping his hand back and forth.

This reckless speech was made by one of the tall boys, one of the great Egos, recently from Nod where the head grows very large, and who, no doubt, was jealous of the favors bestowed on Carl, so some of the girls reasoned. For his

hasty speech he received some very cutting glances from those made of "softer stuff."

Patsey cast a sympathetic glance at Annie, and retorted:

"Iron, wood, and all such rough material—an apt similitude for an unpolished intellect and inferior judgment—are not pliable, even when occasion demands it; but gold and silver—a fair similitude of every noble and beautiful quality—can be bent within all reasonable bounds."

The boys sneered, but Miss Mary smiled effusively at the girl's philosophy, which, in spite of its crudeness, urged the point for which it was intended. Some of the boys understood it better, no doubt, than if she had used a more simple simile; and Mr. Pert spoke again: "That goes to prove the truth of my statement; the boys always—"

"I'll hunt up Carl," said Deacon Johnson, wishing to end the dispute at once, and off he started, swift and elastic as a boy in his teens.

"What shall our king's name be?" asked Jai Smyth, directly their advisor had gone.

"James I," announced a voice in the rear of the assembly, one who had recently read about James I.

"James I., fiddlesticks! Such a cowardly king could never lord it over me. Why, in every battle, he put his men in front, to save himself, and, if he saw the least indication of danger, he would run, leaving his men to do the best they

could. Finally he deserted his army altogether, and too, when they needed a leader the worst," said Jai, who was quite a historian, in either ancient or modern history.

"Let's make 'im King William, then," spoke Will Kenedy.

"Worse than ever. William caused intense dissatisfaction, not with a few, but most all his followers, the Irish generally, for not meeting out a just punishment upon his marauding and thieving subjects," Jai responded again.

"Well, then, I can't think of any other except Queen Victoria, and her king-husband."

The woods rang with laughter again.

Deacon Johnson's task was not near so easy as he imagined, for the boys were huddled in groups, here and there, in most every conceivable little nook over the entire grove; still, on and on he went, with that business-like air so characteristic of everything he set out to do, and he made some very unpleasant discoveries while searching for the missing boy.

One group of small boys, he suddenly ran into, were in a quarrelsome uproar over a wonderful stone that several had the misfortune to espy at the same time. Each one claimed to be the discoverer, and not one of them was willing to relinquish his claim of legal ownership.

Mr. Peacemaker had them all to give in their evidences, and, after the hearing, he said: "Well, now, I can adjust the matter and most amicably,

too," with a hearty good laugh, as he turned the bit of clouded rock over and over in his hand. "This is what we call an Indian-spike, used by the Red Men, or the first settlers of Kentucky, to shoot with, man or beast. About ten miles from here is an old sage-field, literally covered with just such articles as this. Some day we will go over there, for the fun of it, and get as many as we can wag away."

"And will you tell us an Indian-detective-story while we're there?" one of the little fellows inquired, excitedly.

"If I could invent an Indian story at all, it would certainly be on a spot still fresh with recollections of the marauders."

With the queer stone yet in his hand, he turned, and started on his quest, but wheeled abruptly around, and said: "I will keep this for the present, boys. But I'd never quarrel over such a trifle again. Quarreling over valuables, even, is ignoble, to say the least; it hasn't one single redeeming feature, and it always leaves matters worse than they were at the start. It would be much wiser, and far nobler, to let the smallest boy, in such a dispute as this, carry off the prize."

"It's indeed a little'un carrying off the prize this time," said one of the boys, wrathfully, with a strenuous effort to suppress the anger that gurgled in his throat. Johnson overhead the remark, chuckled good-naturedly to himself, and passed on. Soon he came upon a group of larg-

er boys, and was greatly surprised to see Timothy among them.

"You here, Timothy Morris? Why, I thought you went home," and, as he spoke, there was indescribable agitation in the boy's countenance. Timothy had to get several deep breaths before he was equal to a reply.

"I—I didn't go home. Mr. Nick was going down the creek in his buggy, and I rode to the foot of the hill with him."

"But where's your little brother?"

"Oh, he only went home. There wern't room for two more in the buggy, so he said he'd go home."

Timothy opined what was coming, and hung his head, cowardly. He knew that Deacon Johnson, if he happened to get the least little inkling of hypocracy or wrong-doing of any kind, never left a stone unturned; so he was not the least surpraised at the following rebuke: "Selfishness is the bane of all happiness, and I opine that this day will end full of regrets for you, Timothy. It is a fixed law, deeply engraved in every enlightened conscience, that one reaps what he sows. Sow bitter seeds in the hearts of others, if you will, but you're sure to reap wormwood for yourself. Sow kindness, and you will reap happiness. The one rule by which you should govern your life is: 'Do unto others as you would be done by,' and eventually—"

Getting a glympse of the bow and arrow that

Will Kenedy was trying to conceal behind his back, the lecturer broke off in utter astonishment, while Will's countenance was a joke for the whole party. Realizing that he was caught up with, a horrible guilty look came near deforming his face; then, caring no longer to conceal that which they held, he brought his hands to the front.

Between two gnarled roots of an old oak tree were a dozen birds, gasping frantically for life. Will betrayed them by an unfortunate, or fortunate rather, look in that direction, as he tried to hide his guilt-betraying eyes from the searching gaze of the good man.

"Carl has just been moralizing Will and Tim, and they both got mad, strutted like peacocks, and dumped out a lot of braggadocia." This information was given by a boy who had been a staunch friend of the amatuer bird-killing reformer from the beginning.

"But where did you get—"

"I brought them," quickly responded Timothy, for the eyes, bent steadily on the bow and arrow, had betrayed the question. "Indeed, sir, I thought that Will had lost them, and only meant to do a favor by restoring the lost property."

"I will deal justly with Will, and say that he speaks the truth. When told the real facts in the case, he seemed greatly concerned about the matter." said Carl, in just defense of the erring boy. "I told Will not to use them," he added.

Deacon Johnson, remembering the mother's instruction while they were at White's Cross Roads, just before they started, looked earnestly and reprovingly at Will, and said: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the earth."

Carl, hearing that he had been called for up at the rostrum, started immediately in that direction. The girls were exceedingly pleased at his readiness to be crowned king, because the boys could no longer throw "softer stuff" and "pliable" at them.

Immediately upon the crowning of the king, it was necessary to have an assembly where all the duties, restrictions, laws and by-laws, were to be made public, for playing king and queen, was similar to the family institution, where there were rules and regulations to be observed, and where the misdemeanor of one child was a sad reflection upon the whole household. But there was one thing that this king and qeen could never do, and that was to lecture their associates anent their duties, in such a vast audience as this, and under such momentous circumstances. They had not been accustomed to making public orations, and were utterly incapable of facing the music now; so Miss Mary was called to that responsible work.

No sooner was the address finished, than a score on more of nervous, bantling boys popped up, and declared, vehemently, that they must

prepare for a skirmish, immediately, for a wicked kingdom, adjoining their's, was in bickerings and perfect chaos, and they must go down and subdue them. In studying the histories of ancient times, some of the boys had learned of wars and rumors of wars, until they believed that dissentions and fightings and conquering were the most chivalrous things to do; in fact, that was their idea of an ideal kingdom; but Carl, who took the opposite view of the matter, instantly rushed to the rostrum—the fermenting of wrongs in the outset had made him wonderfully independent—and informed them that an ideal kingdom was a peaceable one, where order and good-will invariably reigned. He mentioned the names of some kings and queens, ancient and modern, such as Hezekiah, Victoria, and others, who the world yet delighted to honor because of their wonderful ability to rule quiet and peaceable kingdoms.

"Yes, but what king are you? It's funny to have a king without a name," said one of the boys, resentfully.

"Annie's name is Victoria, but what's your's?"

Some one was just on the verge of announcing: "Victoria didn't have any king to help her reign," when a courier, panting like a sheep on a hot, sultry day, came suddenly on the scene, and cried aloud: "The boys are having a prodigous classical—sh—sh—show at the foot of the hill, a grand—circus sh—sh—show, with a

man—man—managerie, and an art museum, and just the splendedest cl—cl—clown that ever you did see."

Before the last sentence was completed, a multitude of boys and girls rushed off, helter-skelter, with joyous exclamations of wonder and delight, and such a stampede was never witnessed. Others, less excitable, yet almost overcome with delight at the novelty of the change, lingered to await orders. Observing the mutual trend of all their minds, the young king said: "Well, I suppose we'd just as well adjourn our kingdom, and go and see the wonderful sights ourselves."

"That would be better than having a kingdom, anyway," quickly assented the queen. "We have to be so precise, so just so and so, in a play of this kind. Playing king and queen is too big a thing for little folks, anyway, and it isn't just right for two to rule all the rest, anyhow, in a play you know."

"Well said," laughed Deacon Johnson, who offered no objections—though he secretly felt them —to the play at the first, because it seemed to be their preference, and he had said several times during the day: "We mean for the children to rule this day, so long as they keep within the bounds of good order, and do not violate the rules of of justice and decorum."

After these preliminary remarks, the rest of them, mothers, fathers, and happy children, all started off, briskly, to see the art museum and

the wonderful managerie. The latter, because of its superior novelty, they insisted on seeing first, and were permitted to enter the vine-clad tent, two at the time, for the exceedingly small enclosure would accommodate no more than that number at once. The first two who entered shrieked alarmingly, for the first object that greeted their eyes was a hideous-looking, spotted snake, wriggling. wrathfully, in a cage, made of willow withes, and the ugly reptile looked most furious in his strenuous efforts to escape imprisonment. As the two girls bounded out at the door, with the velocity of frightened deers, others rushed up, excitedly, to ascertain the cause of the alarm.

"Where did you get the frightful creature?" was instantly propounded by one of the girls.

"In the creek, while diving for trout; where else could you suppose?" the manager informed them, unhesitatingly.

"Oh, it's a most harmless creature," assured Deacon Johnson, quite clamly, as he rushed up at the first outcry of alarm. "I wouldn't hesitate to wind him about my neck, or to put his head in my bosom.'

Their fears were instantly allayed, for the Gospel exercised no greater influence over this Sunday school troup than the words of Deacon Johnson; so, without further evidences of suspicion or fear, the girls entered, and saw the other captives. There were trout in a basin, made

in the ground especially for them, and they seemed to enjoy their novel retreat quite hugely. In one corner was a tortoise, darting his head in and out from the shell as if frightened at some apparition, and he was persistently making efforts at release; but a string through his head, and fastened securely to a stake, kept him a prisoner. In another corner was a real, but greatly frightened, bunny, wild-eyed as a scared hawk, and trying most assiduously to escape incarceration. Then there was a fine assortment of birds, bluejays, lapwings, kingfishers, linnets, canaries, American larks, robbins, redbirds, blackbirds, purple, green, and oh—it was altogether an ornithological show, was one corner of this manegerie. These innocent and beautiful creatures seemed to consider the spectators their enemies, who wished to do them some flagrant wrong, and, in trying to escape, they beat their little beaks and wings against the wood in a most frightful manner. The canaries were intensely meek-eyed, and chirped the most pathetic notes, as if sobbing distressingly for help. Their tender, pleading cries touched the sympathies of the girls, and one of them said, impressively: "It is so cruel to imprison such sweet, defenseless creatures in this way."

"You'd let your silliness mar the fun of a lifetime," retorted the irate manager. "The birds are just as safe in this cage as they'd be in a tree, or safer, as for that matter. If they were put

in this world for our pleasure, as you bird-wise people say, why not use them in any way that will

"But we are not to use them; they are to be used for us. They were made to enjoy freedom, to eat, fly, or sing, at pleasure. Had they been meant for imprisonment, their wings would have been a useless and baneful commodity," reasonably philosophized Carl Nance, as was his custom in all similar circumstances.

"Yes, it took'd a long time to know how to make a wing, and then it took'd a long time to know how to make a wing fly," said Master Kenneth, with a knowing air that was surprising to behold.

The laughing and clapping of hands that followed this remark was really amusing, and when the storm had subsided, the manager said: "There's as much good common sense in the young'uns statement, as in the one that preceded it."

After all the young people had satisfactorily feasted upon its wonders, the managerie became a topic of inexpressible delight, and innumerable questions were propounded, by the primary philosophers, as to how they obtained the "menagerie?" where did they find it? and did they put their hands on the snake?

As children's interest, even in the most original of novelties, is often evanescent, so they grew weary of these captives, and hied away to the big tent, to see the wonderful clown, and the

splendid art museum. Here they had more room, for the tent, or arbor, was constructed by driving stakes in the ground, making rafters of pliable sapplings, and covering it with sweet-scented hay and glistening cornstalks, obtained, after consulting the proprietor, in an old corn-field at the extreme foot of the hill. It was a matter of utter astonishment to all that so much work had been accomplished in so short a time; but boys, most all boys, are proverbial for their skill in planning, and their speed in executing, in all play-work.

The objects of greatest interest, in the art museum, were the laughable caricatures. Miss Mary, when announcing this grand fete-day, requested as many as could to carry their brushes and pencils, that they might draw and paint to their heart's content, and the injunction had been obeyed. Gretchen, Nicy, and Genie, who, when wanted in the last play, "had not been seen since their arrival," had superintended the whole affair, with an object in view of course, and the caricatures were object lessons indeed and in truth. The first of these showed up Timothy Morris in fine style, first sliding from the wagon, then in an argument with Miss Mary, and last in the act of grasping his little brother's arm. The little fellow was weeping bitterly, while a malicious expression of stubbornness was plainly depicted on Timothy's face.

The picture was held up by the clown, Pat-

sey's brother, Clay, whose wisdom and sarcastic humor, as he pointed out this and that feature of the circumstance, and descanted, wittingly, on the follies of the boy's actions, was most remarkable, and showed his talent well adapted to the position he held.

This caricature was drawn by Gretchen, a cousin of the boy, and who had felt so outraged at his conduct, that she wanted to present him in a way that he could see himself as others saw him; of this she was thinking when he left them at the Cross Roads. He merely got a glympse at the first presentation, understood it, and instantly bolted; but he caught Clay's satirical remarks and the shouts of merry voices, as he elbowed his way through the dense crowd. The circumstance was just too funny for the children, and they shouted, enthusiastically, at the very tops of their voices.

The next was a caricature of Will Kenedy, but this was drawn by an amateur, and the children thought it was a picture of Jugernout, a heathen idol—frequently illustrated in books and papers —until the droll clown made some humorous remarks about the Will Kenedy circumstance, and pointed out the bow and arrow, plain enough when attention was directed to them. Will, or Jugernout, or whatever it was, had a woeful look or rebellion on his, or its face. No, it could never have been identified as Will Kenedy, but for the arrow pointing to a flock of birds over-

head. An enormous heap of them were at Will's feet also, and he kept one foot planted firmly on them, as if fearful of losing them, though they were stone dead. Underneath was the verse:

> Don't kill the birds, the beautiful birds,
> That sing throughout our lands,
> But give them liberty, sweet liberty,
> And feed them from your hands.

Will looked critically and sarcastically, at the monstrous "misrepresentation," he termed it, then turned milder eyes upon his mother, whose brow seemed knit with deepest pity for her erring boy. His wrath forgotten, momentarily, lost in the sympathetic expression seen in his mother's face, he ventured to smile, and thus rebuke the whimsical looks cast at him; but that smile was evanesent. Smile indeed! He felt more like thumping the head of the unknown, satiric artist. "I'll wager it was Genie," he said, grinding his teeth, resentfully.

The next caricature was recognized at a glance, for one of the most skillful of the artists, in this branch of the profession, had drawn it. It was a very saucy little girl, in the foreground of an immense throng, with one finger in a pouting, rosebud mouth, and these words written below: "I don't want to ride with 'em." The freaks this contained were merciful, because it had been drawn by a loving hand, inspired by a spirit of humor and goodwill, and painted more for fun than for rebuke. But Minta, having im-

bibed the full import of the preceding caricatures, saw nothing of pleasantry or honest fun about this. She lowered her eye-lashes, then dropped her face in her hands, and almost shrieked: "Take it down! Take it down! I won't do it again."

The picture was instantly withdrawn, while a ripple of laughter passed through the entire audience.

The other children were too much interested in what was yet to come, to be very much absorbed in Minta's discomforture, for they expected every moment to see themselves presented in some ridiculous position. The exhibitions, so far, had been so startling and surprising, that they looked for nothing but the wickedest comical displays at the hands of the mischievous artists; but imagine their surprise and pure delight—and envy of some no doubt—when illustrations of unselfish deeds by Annie, Patsey, and others, were held for their happy inspection. Cheering cries of applause rippled from every direction, from the hands and tongues of the little tots as well as from the older ones.

"The show turned out to be pretty good after all," was remarked by several, after the curtain had gone down on the last scene; but, as might have been expected, not a few of the mischievous renegades, who had reaped what they sowed, wished that, "I had staid at home, anyway!"

The time for noonday lunch arrived, and you

may be sure that full justice was done the brown chicken, hamberg steak, baked apples, cakes, carmel custards, and ever so many other dainties. From exercising in the open air all that delightful, breezeful morning, their appetites became immensely whetted for a full enjoyment of the rich repast. To the little folks it was unspeakably delicious, this picnic-luncheon in the open air, and they munched and sipped and chatted to their heart's content.

The Misses Vaughn and Semple actually left their books and came to the table. "I 'lowed as ye'd feast altogether on yer books today," said Martha Pruet, a harmless old spinister, who had not the least love for books herself.

The young ladies cast sarcastic glances at her, and helped themselves to the plentiful menu. When done, they helped to gather up the fragments, leaving the ground neat and clear of rubbish as before; after which they lounged, restfully, and then indulged in gay conversation for an hour. Thoroughly rested, their appetites for new and entertaining amusements gained the ascendency. They sang, played numerous games, and made swings in the tall trees. The afternoon fete was closed by visiting the beautiful lake in the valley, where they gathered flowers of every description, color and fragrance. These were carried to their homes, put in vases and jar-

dinaries, and, for many days, served as fresh memorials of "The happiest day of my life." Especially was this true of Annie, for the day was always one of the sweetest memories of her life.

BERTHA'S MYSTERY.

"Where is Bertha?" asked Mrs. Bohanan, with rather a quizzical expression on her calm face, as the little family group assembled around the supper-table.

"I'd be surprised to know that I knew. Bertha's like some of the nymphs in ancient Mythology—you see'er, and then you look again, and she's not. But I 'spose she's reading Miss Claire's story." Here she dropped her knife and fork, looked amusedly—if somewhat wildly—at those whom she addressed, and added: "Oh, father! Oh, mother! I do so wish that you could see Miss Claire's story about some children at a picnic. They were such happy, funny, and droll, creatures, that I just laughed and cried for sheer joy, when she read it to us."

While making the above speech, Cathey beat time to her words with both her chubby little hands.

"Then, if it affects one in that way, I must hear it. Nothing is so condusive to health, longevity, and good spirits, as a hearty good laugh now and then. A great reward awaits the man who introduces some science, scheme, or panacea

of some kind, that will make sad and haughty hearts laugh, or remove any imaginary mountain that may loom up in one's pathway," responded Mr. Bohanan, voluptuously, with a merry twinkle in the dark eyes bent upon his lovely daughter.

Cathey indulged a gay, triumphant cackle, and then said, merrily: "But, father, you smile all the time, and I read a proverb the other day which said, ' a constant smiler is a nuisance;—" with an innocent, uplifted look—"but, if you should hear Miss Claire's story, you'd certainly adopt the tenor pitch in laughing, as I did. Annie was the sweetest little hero in the story."

"You mean heroine, darling."

"No, she wasn't mother; Joe's was the toppinest heroine in the whole story. Annie let her fanticism leave Joe in distress, and when he needed help the most—that doesn't look like a heroness, does it?"

"Joe was a hero, dear, if worthy the title."

"But Carl Nance and Jai Smyth were the heroes, mother. Carl defended the sweet and innocent birds, but Jai exhibited that he knew a great deal of knowledge. Where did he learn about those kings and queens, anyway, Miss Claire?" asked Cathey, concernedly, turning beautiful, appealing eyes toward her governess.

"By reading the histories of England and Ireland."

"Very interesting studies, and one's educa-

tion is incomplete without such knowledge, not only of England and Ireland, but of all countries; while this—"

"But, father, I love my country best, and care only to know about it," with a pompous, patriotic toss of her head.

"It's really nice to be so patriotic, but a true patriotic love is an investigating love, and so I will try your resources a little. Who settled our country, dear? What country is usually called the mother of America? and tell something about when and how our own became a free country?"

Annie tried to think of a reply to the first question, to the second, the third; then she lowered her head in mute silence.

"If we care for none except our own country, we should at least try to be perfect in its history. If every boy and girl would only give one hour each day to the study of history, how well informed they could be in a few years," said Mr. Bohannan, with the tone of insistence in which he usually applied such instruction to his children.

Annie was thoughtful a moment, and then replied: "Dear father, I couldn't tell now, if I knew anything. 'At the Picnic' fills nearly my whole mind, and crowds out everything else, because it seems so strange that Miss Claire would write stories. Would you have thought it, father? Would you—" reverting the question from father to mother.

"I would have thought Miss Claire capable of anything within the scope of our best geniuses," admitted her mother, eulogistically, as she cast an appreciative look in the direction of the governess.

Miss Claire began to vouchsafe some complimentary remarks for the kindness of her gentle patroness, but was speedily interrupted by the late little enthusiast again: "I have read about geniuses, but never knew whether they were people, animals, fish, or what. I saw something about the fish genus. Is Miss Claire a genius, too? What is a genius, mother, anyway, for I can't for my life understand it?"

After the ripple of merriment, provoked by Annie's words, had somewhat subsided, Mrs. Bohanan informed her: "My opinion is that a genius is one who, by dint of hard study, application and perseverance, whether intellectual work or some handicraft, accomplishes some creditable and lasting deed."

"Then I'll start out to be a genius by making my skiff a creditable and world-renowned, lasting handicraft," said Paul, with the air of an experienced man of business.

Mrs. Bohannan left off eating to mark the extent of the expressed aspiration in the young man's countenance. "But I fear that your lack of application and perseverance will eventually mar your prospect," she laughingly supplied, to remind him of his greatest fault.

Annie, though she had been ominously silent, thinking of her mother's explanation of a genius, failed to get a single ioto from these last remarks. Presently, the conversation drifted to other topics, invariably mixed with cheerfulness, humor and laughter, and the dining-room was actually vacated when imaginative Bertha made her appearance. Instantly observing the absense of her mother, an unusual coincidence during the supper hour, she started immediately in search of her. After a prolonged search, a tedious and fruitless round in all the first-floor rooms, she found her in the pantry, with a salver filled with pies and cookies in her hand.

Bertha had a message of supreme importance to communicate to her mother, and deemed it utterly impossible to relinquish her intentions until crowned with success; so, with a questioning in her countenance over-balancing her words, she queried: "Mother, I do want you to tell me if you really think that Miss Claire is a poetess?"

"Why do you think she is a poetess, dear?" quickly asked the mother, fumbling busily with the pastry she was transferring from the salver to the topmost shelf.

"Because I'm quite sure that she nearly approaches the title, if she doesn't wholly come up to it. This morning I read a touching little lyric —at least it would be to those who understand it —on the flyleaf of her own book, written several years ago."

"And Annie almost exploded over one of her stories at the supper table tonight," put in Mrs. Bohanan, quietly and smilingly.

"Yes, Annie and Paul raved over the story, and I thought it did well enough. That's just what she does nights, mother, in her room up stairs; of that I'm quite sure now. And look here, mother," in a smuggled voice, as she glanced stealthily at the door, "is another poem that I'm quite sure she wrote. The sheet is still white and glossy with newness, so it must have been composed right recently. I found it between two chapters of a book she told me I could read."

"She writes a beautiful hand," remarked Mrs. Bohanan, as she glanced over the small, artistically formed letters.

"But that's nothing compared to the other. Her imaginative powers, so plainly exhibited in this poem, are more creditable than the handwrite. These descriptive powers are what I like so much—the full description of the magnificent things in nature. It was said, in one of our lessons the other day, 'things attract their likeness,' which proves that one must have a mind redolent of everything lovely, to be attracted by the splendid objects of nature. But read these lines, please, mother, and see how great is her appreciation of 'nature's golden mysteries.'"

Mrs. Bohanan placed the salver on the shelf, drew nearer the gaslight, and read the following:

SUMMER TIME HAS GONE.

"Summertime has gone, and soft gales,
With murmurings on their wings,
Are gently kissing sun-clad vales,
With mellow breath that autumn brings;
And, as I admire, I contemplate,
The gifts that winter will bring in—
Gladdens for the disconsolate,
Cherry smiles for those shut in.

"Richly blue is the autumn sky,
So sweet the look that nature wears,
That sacrilege it would seem to sigh,
Or let be seen the falling tear,
Though hearts, now pent with silent grief,
(Deeper grief because to silence rent)
In streaming tears find such relief,
As each would deem heaven-sent.

"The autmun leaves, now brown and sear,
On their wooden, shaky thrones,
Seem to tremble, quake and fear,
When the chilly north wind comes;
While gentle whispers seem to say:
'God gave you a mission to fill,
Beautiful leaves, now in decay,
And you've accomplished his will!'

"Right soon the birds will fly away,
To some far-off Southerrn clime,
For these gay songsters rarely stay
With us through the winter-time;
But other hearts will then be glad,
Listening to these birdies shout,
And our own homes'll be richly clad,
If autumn beauties do go out.

"The sky'll be blue as summer-time,
Silent voices as near and sweet,
Beauteous still the golden sunshine,
As whispering the winds we meet;
While the spirit hovering over all,
Calm and strong as in other days,
Ceases never its wooing call,

To keep in straight and narrow ways.

"So, vex not thyselves, beloved friends,
For each dear thing God takes away,
Another as good, or better, he sends,
Thy perplexities to allay;
Yet, still he gives enough of care,
To subdue thy stubborn will,
That thou heed'st another's despair,
And thus the golden rule fulfill."

Yet, still he gives enough of care
To subdue thy stubborn will,
That thou heedest another's despair,
And thus the golden rule fulfill.

As she read these simple lines, in which it seemed that an imprisoned soul was beating its way, almost frantically, into the secret halls of nature's great storehouse of charming attractions, quite a humorous expression went over Mrs. Bohanan's face, and Bertha, who had been silent and very observant, seemed greatly surprised that her mother had no complimentry words for the poem. She waited and waited for them, but waited in vain; so, forgetting that the last question was yet on file, unanswered, she ventured another: "When do you suppose the Muses gave Miss Claire the gift of poetic genius, Mother?"

Mrs. Bohanan laughed good-naturedly.

"She might have gotten an introduction to the Muses in the poetic, cerulean little hollow, in Tennessee, where she was born and reared. She has frequently descanted, quite eloquently, upon the beauty and novelty of the 'little hole—' a veritable abode for the Muses, fairies, or angels almost,

from her pictorial descriptions of it. She says the unique little niche is a poem within itself, and, judging by the pictures of her home-environments, of which there are many in her room, she doesn't exagerate in her description of the 'little hole.' "

At this startling declaration, Bertha leaned against a window for support, and the look that went out from her velvety brown eyes was indeed amusing. "Do you mean, Mother, that those pictures are scenes around her home? I have studied them, oh so carefully, feasted upon their rare lovliness, and considered them great works of art, but never did I think of asking about the archetypes."

"Then you'd be surprised to know that she painted them herself?"

Bertha dilated her eyes, and heaved a deep sigh, as if her breath was almost extinct, while the expression of her countenance was intense astonishment mixed with queerest incredulity, as she said to herself: "How utterly impossible for her to be a novelist, poet, painter, all, when I've been considering her just simple Miss Claire, with sufficient literary attainments to prepare three enthusiasts for college." The thought was prodigous, far too steep for her to climb to all at once.

So many revelations in one single day, spoiled Bertha's appetite, and, with a hurried: "I must go and look at them this very minute," she glided swiftly past the table, as if unconscious of its

existance, and was beyond hearing before her mother could offer a word of remonstrance.

The next morning, which dawned clear, fair, and gloriously prospective of a perfect day, Miss Claire and her pupils availed themselves of a much longer walk than usual. They found themselves near the riverside, two sweepingly long miles from home, before they hardly realized where, or how far, they were going. Soon they were in a glowing, wooded stretch in the river-bottom land, which was intensely beautified by tall, expansive beeches, with emerald foliage so thick and dense that only here and there the sunbeams could be seen; while, nearer the water's edge, was a dense growth of cane, with silvery leaves and nodding heads high in the air above; but—oh, delight of delights! there was the cutest little pig-path, leading right into the water, where the thirsty little animals always went to wash the dust from their throats. Just where this delicate path verged into the water, Paul and Cathey had such indescribable fun, gathering the sparkling drops in their soft little palms, and letting them splash out, like silvery drops from the cloud above, between their slender little fingers. But that which amused Paul most was the echo of his own voice, as, grasping for bubbles made by the swishing of his fingers through the water, he unconsciously halloed:" Whoo-hee! whoo-he!" when the words, "Whoo-hee! whoo-hee!" came back as forcibly and as distinctly, as he had uttered them

himself. Had there been some saucy little youth, walking beneath the hill on the opposite side of the river, and tauntingly throwing Paul's words back at him, they could hardly have seemed more distinct.

Remembering a similar circumstance recorded in one of his lessons, only a few mornings previous, he decided to test the full truth of the philosophy by crying loudly: "I hate you!"

Paul went into the most vigorous ecstacy over the delightful result of this experiment. He was so deeply affected by it, and laughed so tragically, that, forgetting the proximity of the river, he jumped, tumbled summersaults, and into the river he went, head-foremost; but fortunately, the water was very shallow where he fell, and, had he not rolled over and over, and tumbled in blissful glee, his immacculate linen would have remained unsoiled save the side on which he fell. As it was, he was a pretty spectacle to behold.

"Hie away to the sunshine!" cried Miss Claire, merrily, as she caught his arm, all unconscious of the two tiny shoes that were being submerged in the turbid water, and hurried him back onto dry land.

"Shucks! this ain't nothin'," said Paul, in tones much drier than his clothes. "You see water doesn't hurt a duck that's use to it. Well, now, I'm a duck, and you can tell by my looks and clothes that I'm a grass-eater. Don't you see I'm green?" as he tried to banish the awful feeling

of self-vanquishment, for his falling into the water was purely accidental, and accidents usually got away with him.

"You see what you got by telling a boy you hate him," spoke Catney, reprovingly.

"But you can now tell him that you love him, and thus expiate the wrong," counseled the governess, who had enjoyed the first part of the experiment almost as much as Paul himself.

"Love—I—love—you!" cooed Paul, like a dove, but loudly and tenderly, and the amorous echo quickly returned: "I—love—you!"

Miss Claire clapped her hands, and the children shouted applauses until the birds in the tall beeches quit singing to listen, for birds seem just as anxious to hear children's laughter, sometimes, as children are to hear the birdies sing.

The charming sport lost its novelty, however, as all sport will, and the jolly pedestrians turned their steps homeward. Coming to a dense shade on the outskirts of the magnificent grove of beeches, the shady nook, with a fallen tree to serve as a settee, looked so cool and so inviting, that Bertha insisted on resting 'just a leetle while.'"

"Yes, do, and I'll ramble out here in the sunshine, and get mi wool and mi noggin dry," and he danced comically into the open, where the sunrays were smiling down in all their golden glory. Bertha sat down fully six feet from the governess, and glanced covertly at her. Miss Claire had

observed some mysterious meaning in her glances that monring, and felt its power more deeply than ever now. Wishing to dive into the mystery at once, she asked, frankly: "Have you discovered something new in my grim countenance, Bertha? or, are you watching the daily development of marks on my brow that are being made there by the foot-prints of time?"

"I don't think the 'foot-prints of time' are making any marks at all; how could they when you're not more than twenty? It's something else upon which my curiosity has floundered—a something that has planted graces in your face more grand and captivating than I once thought about, and I like to sit aside and try to read its meaning. Since I've known that you can paint, and write stories, and—"

"Oh, if you'd only brought 'At the Picnic,' and read it again in this beautiful out-door place, just such a place as they had the picnic in I do believe in my soul—I'd almost shout if you had. Why didn't you think of it, Miss Claire? It'd be just like a new one in this fairy-woodland," cried Cathey, innocently interrupting Bertha's speech, for innocence was plainly exhibited in the pleading blue eyes, and the sensitive rosebud lips.

"Maybe she has a story that we've not heard yet," returned Bertha, not very good-humoredly. "She could have fifty, or more. It certainly requires as much talent to write one good story as to write fifty. But I like her poems best," as she

turned a grateful look upon her unfathomable lady. Do you know, Miss Claire, I read a poem of your's last night, accidently, that I liked very much? It was, 'Summertime Has Gone,' and reminded me of one of Wordsworth's poems, in which this verse is found:

> 'Roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
> Still craving combinations of new forms,
> New pleasures, wider empire for the sight,
> Proud of her own endowments, and rejoiced
> To lay the inner faculties asleep.'"

A spark of crimson went over Miss Claire's face. "Dear me, my pretty Hebe, don't flatter me that way. How could you compare my silly little poem with that? Where's the line that discovers any similarity?"

"I can't tell just which one, but it's there, because, when reading your's, a thought of the likeness came to my mind, and it would not have come, had there been no likeness. He was called a great poet, and it ought to be an honor to be compared to him. I've seen several good stanzas he wrote, and have wanted to know more about the man. Where did he live, Miss Claire?"

"He was born at Cockermouth, England."

"Well," said Bertha, after sitting sometime with open mouth, ready to swallow down huge crumbs that she felt were forthcoming.

Miss Claire, knowing the battle was on again, and that it would be absolutely impossible for her to shirk the fray, said: "Yes, he was born in

England, April, 1770. When eight years old he was sent to school at Hawshead, in the Esthwaite valley in Lancasshire; and, when twelve years old, his father and mother both being dead, an uncle sent him to St. John's College, Cambridge. He was not by any means a studious pupil in school, and it was said that he had a stiff, moody, and violent temper, in childhood. Yet, in spite of his drollness and tardiness in school, he won some university honors.

"But it seems that, during all his youthful years, from earliest childhood, a great purpose was growing and maturing in his mind. While in his teens the 'delight that he took in contemplating and moralizing from nature was mingled with the enthusiasm of a poet's ambition,' and he began to write crude verses with a fiery zeal. In 1793, when 23 years old, he published "Evening Walks," which showed that he had not been idle. A great fault, probably, was his extreme distrust of self, until thrown into close companionship with Coleridge, who predicted in Wordsworth, the 'advent of an original poetic genius,' and his unstinted praises gave new heart and hope to the young poet. His powers rapidly expanded, his mind, which had been drinking in for years, suddenly grew rich with poetic fancies. The two poets, much together, wrote a joint volume of poems, Wardsworth treating the common incidents of life, and Coleridge the supernatural. His works were voluminous, and, 1841, on the

death of Southey, he was appointed poet-laureate. On the 23d of April, 1850, he died at Rydal Mount, after a short illness, and was buried in Grassmere churchyard."

"Thank you; I always admired every verse I read from his pen, yet knew nothing, absolutely nothing, about the life of the poet; but I do so appreciate, and will ever treasure, what you have told me," she said in grateful tones.

"One's work is not more interesting than one's life, and we do appreciate any work more after having learned something of the worker."

Bertha was on the verge of expressing full credence to this statement, when Cathy bounced up and said: "Oh, if she has I'll truly go into panegerics over it. I do believe in my heart I would do that very thing," for she had waited patiently for a pause, in which to reply to Bertha's remarks anent the possibility of Miss Claire's having another story. She drew a quick breath, and asked: "Have you really got another story, Miss Claire, that we've not heard yet?"

"Yes, I have another."

"Oh, jolly! jolly! jolly! I'm just too glad for any of you to notch up with me. But what is the story about, my darling, oh my darling? for I just can't wait to hear that?" as she hugged her teacher's arm close to her bosom, and then coiled her own about her neck.

"It's about a girl whose name was Angel."

"Such a sweet name. She must have been

heaven-good to have such a name as that. Was she your sister, or just a friend?"

"Neither one. A grandfather of mine, who lived in the far West, gave me the history of Angel's life, and I made a story of it."

"My shadow's most under me, and it's time to go home," chirped an authoritative little gentleman, breaking up the conversation in a most ill-bred fashion.

But the speech was a perfect reminder of a pressing necessity—a change of garments for Paul, for a pretty sight he was now, after having danced, and tripple-toed, and capered in the dust, until it was absolutely impossible to distinguish whether his clothes were made of cemented-clay, or homespun coperas. His mother laughingly declared that they were made of the former.

ANGEL.

Col. Read was walking, leisurely, along the elevated turnpike from the village to Glendale, his magnificent country home in Southern Missouri. His gait was more tardy than ordinarily, his step more uncertain, for his mind was so thoroughly occupied with the events of the day, especially where those events concerned himself, that he gave but little heed to the details about which he was usually so thoughtful and careful —the beautiful day, the winds, birds' songs, down to the very gravels under his feet. A marvelous streak of good fortune had come to him that day, in the acquirement of several hundred dollars profit in a business transaction, and he was chuckling over the way in which it had happened; but, so far as the accumulation of wealth was concerned, fate had always been very kind to him. Somehow, Col. Read was not wont to attribute his prosperity to good judgment, or to his business ability of any description, but to the kindness of fate, the Giver of all good things. He was a staunch advocate of the doctrine, "What is to be will be."

As he turned the corner of an extensive meadow, within sight of his own pallatial home, he was

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suddenly startled by childish shrieks and cries for help. Pausing abruptly, he listened intently, and soon discovered that the shrieks came from the meadow to his left. Hastening rapidly onward, he saw a girl running as though her life depended on the swiftness of her speed, while "Nannie," a pet sheep belonging to Col. Read's children, was running and skipping and butting, with all the vim and energy of a spring lambkin. Believing Nannie to be quite harmless, Col. Read laughed quite ludicrously at the scene; nevertheless, the girl, to whom Nannie was a perfect stranger, seemed so intensely frightened that he called out loudly: "Nannie! Nannie!"

The fleecy, bouyant-spirited pet heard the call, recognized the voice at once, and, seeing Col. Read's beckoning hand, started off in a full tilt to meet him; then, for a short distance, she walked quite mannerly beside him, only a tall wire fence separating them. Reaching a gate leading into the meadow, Col. Read entered, and gathering Nannie's fleecy locks in his hands, he shook her saucily, and said quite pertly: "Why did you act so rudely, Nannie?"

Nannie took the reproof in all good humor, as meaning a playful challenge, so, tilting back her white fringed ears, she came against his legs with all the energy and force of her little body.

By this time the frieghtened girl had arrived on the spot, panting from sheer exhaustion, while her face was as scarlet as red flannel. After the

Colonel's kindly salutation, she was demurely silent, endeavoring, perhaps, to recuperate the strength expended in the mad run; then, with catches of breath between some words, she said: "I run'd with double-quick steps, but the little heathen like to a got me, anyway. He would a got me, anyway, if he hadn't a tangled up in some briars, the ugly brute."

While uttering these words, she critically eyed the gay frolicsome creature, as a wild-eyed hawk eyes the prey on which he anticipates a feast.

"But Nannie merely wished to play with you," said Col. Read, whose sympathy had been stirred by the girl's awful fright. "She was merely in for a frolic, and took your gallop through the briars as a challenge for her to run also. My children taught her all kinds of odd games."

"Then next time you want to play say so, and I'm in for it, too. Don't run out a make-believe false, and scare the life out of the birds of the air," said the queer girl, in meek tones, as she tenderly patted the dirty little nose, which fondled about her hands in a friendly way.

Col. Read was deeply amazed at the girl's extravagant language, but it would have been utterly impossible not to have admired the beautiful, well-chiseled features that rendered her face so attractive. He hadn't the slightest memory of ever seeing that face before, so he asked: "What is your name, little girl?"

"I had two names at first, but forgot one of

them. I don't like Angel none; that's what they call me now. They say that angels be spirits in heben, and I ain't no spirit. I'm 'fraid of spirits, cause they're ghosts, and walk about at night to skeer people. So you see why I don't like to be called Angel." While making this speech her voice was more natural, and he discovered that she had a quaint, sweet way of accenting words which made them interesting in spite of the slanggy phrases.

Col. Read, with one had on the fence, while the other still caressed Nannie's white wool, failed to see the awful frown of resentment and austerity in the girl's countenance, as she added, bitterly: "I hate the brutes that took me from my mother, and I'd kill 'em—" here she doubled up her fist, and pounded into the air—"if I could get 'em. God's a awful spirit that's good to some folks, and mean to some. He was mean to me, awful mean, when he let'd them wicked gypsies take me from my home."

This fastidious Colonel was absolutely astonished at such reckless profanity from the lips of one so young and innocent-looking; and surprised at himself because he could think of no convincing words with which to refute her horrible ideas of God. He had never been accused of possessing any very conspicuous Christian virtues, yet, he was reared in a Christian country, by Christian parents, and had never known anything else than to accept as just and true the deference and ho-

mage paid to God by all Christian people and nations. Such principles were inculcated, and accepted as true, in his youth, and he had never had a single desire to renounce them; but, because of the little thought and the less discussion, he had given them, he was wholly unprepared to argue such principles from the simplest standpoint. So, when this little wandering waif charged God with injustice, he found himself utterly incapable of formulating one single argument with which to refute her false denunciation; so he simply said: "Well, I must go, Nannie. Where are you going, Angel?"

He had been so puzzled and frustrated by her speech, that he had not realized the possibility of her having nowhere to go, though one might have inferred such a thing from her speech.

"I'm going to Col. Read's. Mrs. Coley told me to take this letter to Mrs. Read, or to the old man, if I wanted to," she retorted, with perceptible irascibility yet in her tones, as she slowly unfolded a dingy-looking sheet of paper.

"I am Col. Read. Let me see the paper," as he moved a step forward, smiling effusively, at her mention of "The old man," of course.

She obeyed, unhesitatingly, but he had a sweet time reading the illegible scrawl; but he finally did apprehend sufficient to guess at the remainder, and then a most quizzical expression went over his face. Folding the paper, he put it in his vest pocket, tardily enough, then looked at Angel in

such a queer, doubting way, that, to her thinking, she almost read her doom in his austere countenance. She knew the contents of the paper full well.

"If you don't like it, I needn't go. I can go and hunt for my father's home. I know I can find it, even if it's in Ironland," she said, in perverse tones.

She meant Ireland, of course, so Col. Read thought; but, as she ventured this proposition, the cool look of determination in her countenance was, in his judgment, more attractive than any attitude she had yet assumed. "There's something in that girl worth being brought out," he said to himself.

"We will let Mrs. Read settle the matter," he finally assured her, starting in the direction of home, and bidding her follow. During the remainder of his walk home, his thoughts were altogether of a different character to what they were as he strolled through the grove of tall tress, before hearing the girl's cries for help.

After several unsuccessful efforts to make anything of "the cross-patch hen-scratches," as she called them, Mrs. Read declared, emphatically, that it was utterly impossible for her to read the letter, and passed it over to her husband.

Angel listened to the reading of the note as intently as though its contents were entirely new to her; but, with her infinitessimal knowledge of human nature, she was wholly incapable of divin-

ing the meaning of the mysterious expression on the fine lady's intelligent-looking face, as she listened to the hackled—he was merely making hash of sentences—reading of her husband. The expression was not a wry look of abhorrence, as though some unwelcome burden was being thrust upon her, against her will; neither was there in her look the almost infinite compassion that invariably characterize women who possess much sympathy for the unfortunate, and more especially women of Mrs. Read's habits. The look seemed, rather, one of deep, unfathomable bewilderment, as though the circumstance was too new and too intricate to be understood well enough to grasp at once, and to compassionate the unfortunate. When the letter was finished, she looked at her husband critically, mysteriously, and then at the little stranger in a modest, searching way.

Presently, Col. Read, wishing to play mum in the affair, quietly retired.

"Were you sorry to see your foster-parents leave this morning?" asked Mrs. Read, with a maternal air that stirred the girl's heart.

"No; it 'us no use to be sorry when they didn't keer for me," the girl replied, impetuously, rocking her chair to and fro in a furious way.

"But how do you know that they didn't care for you?"

"They wouldn't a gone off and left me, if they'd a keerd. They's good a nough to me while I's with 'em, but when they went off and left me,

I know'd they didn't love me. I hate 'em cause they left me," and here her rosy lips curved into a scorn more intense than that betrayed by the words she uttered.

"But they say in the note that they didn't have the money to buy your ticket, and that they knew not what hardships awaited them in Texas. It seems that they did not consider you a burden to themselves, but didn't care to make life a burden to you, as would doubtless be the case if they fail of success in Texas. They expressed the tenderest wishes for your welfare, and want to hear immediately if you got a good home. It seems to me that, if they had cared nothing for you, they would not have manifested so much interest in you," thus reasoned Mrs. Read, more interestedly and more pathetically, than was her usual custom in addressing strangers, even children.

For a few moments the girl stared with dilated ed eyes, a look of bitter resentment shining in them. Mrs. Read's encouragement had only served, it seemed, to arouse her to a deeper sense of being most flagrantly wronged, and she twisted her brown fingers in and out, nervously, as she retorted: "But folks show their love by their works more'n they do by words. That's what Mr. Lidall, the preacher, said. Mrs. Coley left me to starve, or to die alone, for she didn't know that I'd git a home. She tried to make me believe that God takes keer of people, but he's never tuck keer of me yet. He let some wicked Gypsies

take me from my home, that he did. He's mean, and I hate him. He's no better than that wicked coon who makes people do wrong so's he can git 'em," she cried in despairing tones, emphasizing the last two sentences in a frantic way by pounding the arm of her chair with her fist.

Mrs. Read's astonishment, as she listened to the girl's heartless tirades, was too great for any pen description. An indescribable fear, mingled with reproach and intense compassion, crept into her heart and almost chilled its very blood. She had a most sympathetic nature, that, usually, was quickly touched by the misfortunes or infirmaties of others, not only those with whom she was thrown in contact, daily or occasionally, for her missionary spirit reached out unto the uttermost parts of the earth, and here was a little heathen right here in her own house, the first one with whom she had ever come face to face. She laid aside her Paradise Lost and Martyrology, two books that had absorbed her attention for the last few days, and going to a front window, she sank into a miniature divan, and said, in quavering tones: "Come here, Angel."

She drew the obedient girl down on her lap, clasped a little brown hand in her own, then, with eyes filled with beautiful elequence, she threw her hand in the direction of a magnificent scene that fronted the window, and remarked: "You say that God is mean, and you hate him; see what a beautiful world he made, as much for you as for

any one else. See that splendid slope over yonder, with its emerald carpet, and glistening foliage, all lighted up by the luminous sunshine, God's own work, created as much for you as for any one. How glorious is that grand scene. Is there anything in all that beauty calculated to inspire hate? Should it not rather inspire appreciation, reverence, and love, for the divine Creator? What do you think the world would be without that sunshine out there? Would it not seem like a bleak and barren wilderness never to have the sunshine? Well, that is just what a life is that's destitute of faith in God, and love for humanity. If you think of God just right, have faith in his justice and goodness, and love your fellow creatures, then the sunshine in your heart will be greater than that out there."

"But I wouldn't want it in my heart; it might burn me up hot days," returned Angel, earnestly.

Mrs. Read smiled at the girl's ludicrous expression; then stroked her yellow hair in a tender, maternal way, and proceeded:

"We don't unuerstand why God permitted the Gypsies to take you from your home. Misfortunes come to the very best of people sometimes, but, when they remain true to themselves, true to duty and to God, such misfortunes prove, eventually, to be fortunes with the 'mis' left entirely off. It is wrong, so wrong, to lose hope and grow wicked. It would be better, sweeter, and nobler, for you to live in faith, a beautiful hope-inspiring

faith, in seeing your sweet mother some day. All good things come to the faithful and the true."

The girl seemed but little affected by these persuasive appeals, and, realizing the utter uselessness of further argument in her present mood, Mrs. Read, wishing to distract her thoughts from unpleasant themes, handed her a scenic-albium to occupy her mind, while she herself attended to some urgent morning duties.

"Who's that little tag I saw in your room?" asked Mrs. Bate, the housekeeper, as she suddenly ran upon Mrs. Read in the pantry.

"She is, or was, foster-child to Mr. and Mrs. Coley, who started to Texas this morning."

"Yes, yes: sure enough. I know about her. The Coleys lived on Mr. Dickey's farm, where I've spent many a jolly day. And she's the kid that was stolen by the Gypsies—well, well! They say she's lots of natural sense, but no trainin'. But why did they leave her behind?"

"They claim, in a letter sent by Angel, that they hadn't sufficient means to take her with them. So they committed her to the hands of charity."

"The cheek some people do have," muttered Mrs. Bate, irefully, with a suspicion of additional work for herself. "And are you thinking of adopting her into your 'ristocratic circle?" with something like a sneer in the emphasis of the last two words.

With a sudden gesture, and a comical look be-

yond the comprehension of the housekeeper, Mrs. Read gently clasped the door handle, and said: "I hardly think so. That would hardly be the proper thing to do. While I have the utmost sympathy for the homeless child, she is a slangy little heathen, rowdy and unmannerly, and the very thought of her daily contact with my children is simply appalling."

"That's it. She'd ruin your children. But folks do say heaps about you being a child-hater because you won't let your's go with them that run on the street, and get little training. But you're right, and they'll see it some day."

Col. Read, passing leisurely through the back hall, overheard his wife's last remark, and paused at the pantry door, with this apology: "Pardon this intrusion, ladies, but there's a rule requiring the presence of at least one disinterested judge in any council, when a momentous question is at stake. But may I be inquisitor as well as judge, Pearl, and ask what you intend to do with the slangy little heathen?"

In spite of Angel's twelve years, they, one and all, persisted in calling her "little."

"If we are to judge of her needs by her manners, and the language she uses, a Reformatory would be the most suitable place for her, I think."

"A Reformatory?" quickly interrogated her husband. He seemed shocked at this proposal of his wife's, and leaned more heavily against the oaken-cabinet, just outside the pantry door.

"Yes, a Reformatory," mildly reiterated his wife. "No conscientious mother would want to dump her into her own circle of respectable and polished boys and girls." While saying this, she faced her stately husband with a mild but commanding look in her large hazel eyes.

The fact of the case was that the full meaning of a Reformatory, with all its hideousness, had flashed, like lightening, through Col. Read's mind, and his paternal sympathy for the helpless, the innocent-helpless, prompted him to say, boldly: "You certainly don't mean it, Pearl. A Reformatory is for wretches, for the lawless, the disobedient, for the hardest characters in general, and who ever goes there gets a stigma that remains with them through life. This girl is too young to be anything than innocent, her face is a picture of innocence, and her slang and ill-bred manners may be justly attributed to associations."

"Then I will suggest a Mission School, an Orphans' Home, or some good private school for girls. She would be cared for, and well trained, in any of them," responded Mrs. Read, in brisk tones.

"It seems to me," he spoke moodily, almost crushing the new hat he held in his right hand, "that the supervision and tutorship of some good motherly heart is the essential thing in her case. She could never be developed half so well in an army of distracting children, as in a home where

special care could be given her. You say she is a little heathen, and you are so fond of helping the heathen, Pearl."

These last words were like a dash of cold water on Mrs. Read's proud heart; it was indeed the most unthought-of course she had expected her husband to take. He was most respectable and sociable with friends, most courteous with strangers, in fact, ready to accord all their just dues, but never before had she known him to rise to such an altitude in defense of any object of charity. His plea astonished her more deeply, perhaps, because she was so sure that he knew her scruples anent the matter of helping the heathen. She had the means to give, and never thought of stinting her gifts, but that was the limit of her conscious duty, and for that she deserved abundant praise.

"But, Col. Read, dear, I have never deemed it necessary to bring them into my home. I could, in a little time, have a Reformatory, a Mission, or something similar, right here in my own house, and it would probably be filled in a month. But I don't feel that to be my duty. Let that be for those who feel called to such a work, and who can look to others for the means. I'm truly sorry for this little Angel, and am willing to do much toward having her educated, but, really, I don't consider it advisable to keep her with my children."

Col. Read spun out a long breath, then turned, and walked away as quietly as he had come.

"I'm surprised," said Mrs. Bate.

"At who?" asked the other, thoughtfully.

"At who indeed! Who'd a thought that Col. Read a been pleading for that taggy little huzza, who'd ruin your children quicker than no time?"

Mrs. Read's deep sigh was as mysterious as her husband's had been. Passing back through the hall, she came suddenly upon Angel, with a broad smile on her face now, sliding down the balustrade of the hall stairs, astride, just as a mischievous boy would do. She came to the floor tempestously, rose hastily, with a roguish smile twinkling in the corners of her eyes; and rushing to Mrs. Read, she threw an arm around her waist, and said: This house is so grandee that I wanted to see up-stairs. It's just awful up there —so nice, you know. I found me some ribbon in the road up there," as she held up a yard of glossy blue silk.

Mrs. Read had not the heart to reprove her now, but she did afterward.

"Come into this room with me; it's so grandee I want to see it," as she threw her finger in the direction of a large, luxuriously furnished parlor.

"This is a dandy carpet. Did you paint all the flowers on it? Mrs. Coley made all her carpets streaked, with white and blue and yellow streaks in them. These flowers are purtier than streaks. What's this that makes such grande music?" she inquired with childish interest, as

she pressed the white keys of a handsome piano.

"That's a piano."

"I never seed one before. Will you play with it some?"

Wishing to please the enthusiastic girl, Mrs. Read sank on the stool, and then her slender fingers traced each other up and down the musical keys, softly, solemnly, filling the room with sweetest notes from one of her girlhood songs, and when she finished tears were streaming down Angel's cheeks. She sobbed and sobbed, and mourned so bitterly, that Mrs. Read found it absolutely impossible to quiet her. Finally, when Angel grew calmer, she ventured to ask the reason of such deep emotion.

"Oh, it made me think so sorrowfully of my dear mother. She may be in heaben now, playin' in a harp that makes sweet music like this, and I want to see her so. I want to be so good, and go where she is. Oh, mother, my mother!" and she rung her hands and moaned and cried most piteously.

Mrs. Read comforted her the best she could, but she could not feel the awful destitution that wrung the child's heart; that is something acquired through sad experience; but when the great passionate wave was swept from the girl's heart, she looked entreatingly at Mrs. Read, and implored: "Oh, Miss Read, will you let me stay in this dandy house? It's more like heaben in here than any place I ever was. Mr. Lidall 'splained heben

one day, and it was most like this dandy house, all fixed up so fine, you know."

Mrs. Read was speechless for a moment, and her look of perplexity and sadness evidenced the confused state of her mind. In spite of the slang, and the bitterness of heart so frequently exhibited, Angel was interesting. She had already shown great depths of feeling—joy, bitterness, anguish, as well as an active imagination that might be cultivated into something quite beautiful; but how long and how tedious must be the process of cultivation. It would require much time, patience, and perseverance, to polish and refine that untaught nature, and who could forecast the extent of evil on her associates, in the meantime? As she thought of her rude speech, barbarous manners, and awful temper, she shuddered at the mere thought of retaining her in the home. Think not that her reluctance was prompted by an inhuman spirit, cold-heartedness, or false pride; it was the feeling that every true and anxious mother has for her well-born, and well-tutored offspring—a fear of contamination by association; but, after revolving this phase of the problem for quite a time, she theorized from another standpoint altogether; when all the circumstances were fully considered, it did seem that the hand of fate had domiciled her in this home, or that, as her husband had intimated, and as she had already half-admitted to herself, it must truly be a providential arrangement. If this was true

would not prevention of harm or danger be forthcoming? Would not some beneficent spirit intercede for the right, and bring about the happiest results? Thus she philosophized as well as her distracted thoughts would allow. Angel's request had been so sudden, so unlooked-for, that it was difficult to collect her flurried thoughts sufficiently to decide the matter correctly, just at the present, though her sympathy for the child was beyond word-description. She sat so long in absolute silence, with thoughtful mind and bowed head, that Angel quitted her side, and wandered about the room to examine all the beautiful drapery and bric-a-brac.

"You think you would like to live here, then do you, Angel? But do you think that you could be thoroughly satisfied to live with us?" she asked, as the girl, in wild-eyed bewilderment at the many curious objects in the most beautiful room she had ever seen, came back to her side again.

"I would like to live here, yes I would; and I could be satisfied here, I know I could. I would always be as gay and happy as a bird in this grand house. I'd be filled with that sunshine you told me about. I would—I would—" she was so intensely elated at the prospect of staying that she could not possibly express all she felt about it; but she laid a sadly taned hand on Mrs. Read's arm, and looked the eager joy and appreciation she had no words to describe. As she did so, Mrs. Read scanned the expectant features quite criti-

cally, and pronounced her a little tanned beauty. Her features were well-molded and, in moments of calm repose, lovely, the expression in her eyes varying with every changing mood—all of which made her pretty to look at. Her hands were small and shapely, but immensely sunburned. So Mrs. Read's final decision was that, in all probability, this stranger must be the daughter of a genteel lady.

"And you think you would be happy here; but would you be obedient? Would you set your heart on becoming a little lady, and trying to please me in all things?" the good lady inquired, tenderly, placing one hand on the girl's shoulder, while the other gently caressed the disheveled hair.

"I know I would be happy here, and obedient, too. I'd try to please you. I'd try to be hebengood in this grandee house. I like you ever so much, and you'd make me be good, wouldn't you?"

Like many other children, Angel talked better when good-natured, and now her innocent eyes filled with serenest joy, which touched Mrs. Read instantly. She had the utmost confidence in the honesty of the impromptu words, but, knowing human nature, even child nature, as she did, she was too discreet to make rash promises; so she said: "I will promise to let you stay awhile, Angel. You might become dissatisfied and want to leave us; but, while you do stay, you must be exceedingly careful about how you talk, and never use ugly words. Ugly words and bad manners

spoil the most beautiful of girls, while pure words and good manners make the ugliest of them very sweet."

Angel's face illuminated instantly, and it is difficult to say what she would have done, had not four gay and laughing children, three girls and a boy, with nicely combed heads and all robed in immaculate white, came trooping down stairs, into the parlor, to tell "mother" about their morning lessons, and how the governess had eulogized their good behaviour, so much more than usual; but a mere glympse at the homely stranger girl caused them to pause abruptly in the doorway. They surveyed her quizzically, with dilated eyes, from head to foot. Then their glances, after the stranger had been duly summed up, from one to another, and at their mother, were quick and interrogative.

"This is Angel," began Mrs. Read, gently. "And she wants to live with us. What do you say, my dears?

"But she shan't do it," roared Paul, imeptuously, as a look of sweeping scorn went toward Angel. This blunt refusal was not at all surprising, or unexpected, for the vivacious Paul had often expressed a dislike for girls, all girls except his own sisters, and he never could be influenced, on any pretext whatever, to manifest a due regard for the sex. Whether he was in real earnest, or whether it was a whim, a wish to tease, or whatnot, they could not tell, but it seemed

that the notion, whim, or whatever it was, was unchangeable. He liked manliness, he said, boasted much of his own strength and courage, and often said that girls were too soft, too feminine, too easily frightened, and altogether too girlish in their ways to suit him.

"She shan't stay, but you can get another boy," he repeated, briskly, after a moment's pause, and then he cast another scathing, "I dislike-you-look" at the shrinking girl, whose attention had been so completely absorbed by the handsomely dressed children, that resentment was then foreign to her mind, or entirely forgotten in "this hour of need," so she argued afterward.

"But I want another sister," said Vivian, pertly. She was the youngest of the girl-trio, and had never yet been convinced that she had half enough sisters. Her proposal caused Angel's countenance to beam with a radiant delight, for she thought that she had found one friend among the children already, and a cute little darling she was, too. The two oldest were more beautiful, and were exquisitely dressed in white linen, ruffles, and laces, but Vivian had the kindest and sweetest looking face. She could be kind to a stranger also, for she walked up to Angel boldly, and laid a soft hand on her sunburned cheek, while the funniest, cutest look enraptured her darling face and eyes.

Paul scolded, and the other sisters looked askance, when Vivian seemed so familiar with a

stranger, but she followed the promptings of her own little heart, nevertheless.

"I knew that my baby would not be rude," said the mother, who had risen at the first sound of the gong; then she led the gay troop into the dining-room, the savory fumes of a well-cooked dinner meeting them at the door. Angel's first impulse, when seated at the table, was to cast admiring glances at the steaming, appetizing dishes, and over the many curious cut-glass articles before her. It was an elegant-looking table, with immaculate cloth and napkins, delicious viands, and highly polished silver, china, and cut-glass.

To Angel's chagrin and disappointment, Paul, for whom she conceived a great dislike when he spoke against her, sat just opposite her at the table, and his satirical, mimicing glances were anything than pleasant to her. It was evident that he was on the constant lookout for some blunder or violation of table etiquette from his queer antagonist. He found supreme enjoyment in ridiculing what he did not like, what was funny, or the mistakes of others, and, to his supreme delight, this freak had a foundation on which to vent itself before dinner ended.

The cook brought in a beautiful flowered bowl of mixed-cutlets, and Angel, wholly ignorant of what it really was, and believing it was to be some sort of desert to which she was first helped, modestly took the bowl and set it on her plate.

Paul, through fear of reproval, made a mighty effort to constrain himself after that, but his funny-cup ran over in spite of the effort, and he cleared his throat, hummed, hawed, and cackled, until his face was as read as the strawberries on his plate. His father, wholly ignorant of what had passed, so busy had he been with his own knife and fork, used such denunciatory phrases as, "Why, Paul!" and "What's the music now?" while his mother, in sympathy with her Angel, cast reproving looks at him, but to no purpose. His cup of fun must run over or he would die.

"If you want it that bad, just take it," said Angel, pushing the bowl toward his plate, while her crimson cheeks and pouting lips indicated the extent of her annoyance.

This act of retaliation cooled Paul's arder more than his father's words, or his mother's reproving glances; in fact, he felt so outraged by it, that he gave the bowl a tilt which scattered the cutlets pell-mell over the spotless linen.

"I would," began Angel, with deeply blushing cheeks, but, catching Mrs. Read's penetrating glance, she remembered her promise, and desisted. It was difficult not to retaliate, but she could forego most anything until the newness had worn from her late good fortune, so she argued.

Paul was so ashamed of his misdemeanor, that he left the table with an unappeased appetite, for fear he might break down and ask forgiveness before Angel. Angel soon followed the rest out

of the dining-room, but with a wistful, longing look in her eyes. As they passed out, Mrs. Read's thoughts were almost dreadful; what room had she to condemn the conduct and speech of others when her own acted so badly? But this was not common among her own, the extent to which it was carried to-day was totally unknown. Paul must have been intensely aggravated at the presence of the stranger.

That night Mrs. Read gave Angel a book to read, the life of a sweet girl, who struggled against a bad temper, hate, and many other evil habits, but who, through determination and perseverance, gained the victory over them all, and became one of the sweetest little women in all the land. She clasped the book to her bosom, and said: "I like to read, when I can get anything to read. They didn't have no books at Mr. Coley's." Her future life proved that she told the truth about reading. But something happened later on which pleased her better than anything; she received information about the children's garden-party the next day, and congratulated herself, immensely, for having made her advent in the very niche of time. She had never been to a garden party, nor a party of any kind, and opined that it must be something unusually nice; but, dear child, could she have forecast the events of the following day, she would possibly have wished that she might never see a garden-party. In entire ignorance of those events, how-

ever, she was wakeful and restless in the former part of the night, deeply absorbed in the gay and blissful time she was to have the next day. She never had a good time worth talking about, she said to herself. It was indeed surprising that she did not, no not for one moment, take her party-costume, which is usually the first thought of most girls, into consideration; but her oversight of the matter was due to the fact that she had never attended a garden-party. She might have thought that children have garden-parties in their worst old dresses, which proved that she had many, many things to learn in this new world she had just entered.

The next morning, when Angel woke and opened her eyes, the sun's golden rays were streaming in at the open window, casting a brilliant effulgence over the rich mahogony furniture in the room, and reflecting sprakling rays from the long mirror. In spite of wakefulness during the night, it was a morning to enliven Angel's spirits, and whisper cheer and goodwill. At the first recollection of the garden-party, she jumped to the floor with astonishing velocity, dressed herself speedily, and was out in the yard, fresh, hale, and hearty, before the other children awakened. They were not such early birds as Angel, noway, for it was her usual custom to breathe in the first invigorating breezes of the morning, which accounted, in part at least, for her rosy cheeks.

Angel was a dear lover of domestic fowls and animals, so her first attention, this morning, was given to these pets. Almost innumerable chickens, turkeys, and ducks, attracted her attention, so, after a long and impatient search for the gate, into the poultry yard she bounded. Such large and gay plumaged chickens she had never, never seen, for there were the rarest species of the Brown-leghorn, Buffcoachins, Domineckers—oh the finest varieties of every stock of fowls to be found, and they were speckled, spotted, streaked, white, yellow, and every other conceivable color. It was such a pretty, pretty sight, and, when they craned their pliable necks, to look one-eyed at Angel, she laughed outright. To her, chickens had such comical ways, that she credited them with thinking all kinds of funny things, and holding such comical conversations with one another. "They deserve the most beautiful of names; they do," she said to herself, pointing to a high-minded, top-knot rooster, to whom she gave the name, "Billingsgate," and others she named Tom, Henry, Budgear, Harmanger, Silas, and Judas; but she commanded Judas, in all confidence, that he must not turn S- -must not turn bad, and betray his brethren. Then there were fat, saucy-looking hens, with sparkling, mischievous eyes, which she named, "Polly, Patsey, Katy, Susie," and so on, and on. She christened them until she could go no further, because there were no more names to think of; so numerous

were the beauties that she hardly made a beginning.

Deciding to defer this matter until another day, she proceeded to the stable, to get a view of the fine horses, some of which she had already seen. She wanted to know the name of every one, for names had much weight with her. The groom informed her that the name of the black horse, with a polished, silky exterior, was Itchel; that a sleek bay's name was Boscal, and half a dozen others bore equally queer names. She learned, and to her immense delight, that Guidone, a tall, handsome gray, was very meek and docile, could be briddled any time by the tiniest chub on the place, and that he would be at her service just any day she wanted him. So she instantly set a claim upon Gidone, and affirmed, in most authoritative terms, that she would ride to her heart's content—a pleasure that had always been denied her.

"Mr. Man, may I try sweet old Gidone just a little now?" she inquired of the groom, anxiously, for it seemed that she could not possibly wait another day for the pleasure.

"Just as you like, Miss," replied the groom. "I'll lead 'im in this 'er briar patch, and you can trot 'im round awhile."

Angel was soon snugly ensconsed on the broad, soft back of Gidone, then away the gay trotter went, rarely heeding the guidance of the hand that held the reins. On, on he went, with elevated

head, swishing tail, and proud step. Angel was almost like a feather on his great back. He could have disgressed in any path that suited him, but on, on he went, in the one cow-path, and Angel was just as happy as she wanted to be. Almost in the center of the field, was square-off elbow in the cow-path, and here the vivacious Gidone made such a quick turn, that Angel tumbled in a heap on the ground. She was up like a flash of lightning, however, and her first impulse was to ascertain if she had been seen by the "man" at the stable. It would mean death to her future riding for him to discover her crudeness in the art. Failing to see him, she started after the straying animal as fast as her feet could carry her, but her way was intercepted by that rolicking, mischievous sheep, tearing, scraping, and pawing, as if he meant to tear her into shreds. Forgetting the advice of Col. Read, in her first experience with this pet, she started, running, screaming, and calling for help, and was so frightened that she seemed wholly unconscious of safety even after the groom had met her half way.

The children were all up by this time, and the whole family, including the servants, hastened out to ascertain the meaning of the screams. After getting into the secret of it all, Paul just fairly roared and danced with merriment, and tantalized Angel most rudely about her "fine riding arts."

Great excitement prevailed among the children

after breakfast that morning, for their flurried little minds were filled with such glowing visions of white dresses, ribbons and laces, and the exalted privilege of receiving the invited guests, that they hardly knew what to do first.

Angel failed to give her costume a single thought until the other children were robed for the occasion; then, getting a sly glympse of their superb white dresses, kid gloves, blue ribbons, and fluttering curls, with a heart full of envy and bitterest agony, she swept up the stairs with the agility of a fleet-footed hound; and throwing herself on a hair-cloth sofa, in her own cosy little room, she gave full vent to a flood of tears. There she staid, and moaned and groaned, and wept, until her eyes were swollen almost beyond recognition. A diligent search was made for her in every corner and cranny of the house down stairs, before her own room was thought of, and then she was found in this sad predicament.

Mrs. Read was apprised of the distressing circumstances, and hastened to the distraught girl with all possible speed. Angel related, unhesitatingly, the true cause of her perturbance, which touched Mrs. Read's motherly heart most sensitively, and she said quite pathetically: "Your trunk came this morning, dear; let us see what is in that. I expected to see to your toilet when through with my morning duties."

At the sound of footsteps, and the swish of Mrs. Read's dress in the hall, Angel had sat up-

right on the sofa—she had been laying with her face almost smothered in the cushions—and, replying to the gracious lady, she waved both hands frantically, and said: "There's nothing fit to wear in that old trunk. I know what's in it. I haven't got anything but old rags, old faded calico dresses; no ribbons, and no slippers."

Mrs. Read quietly opened the trunk, and, when entirely emptied of its contents, she knew that the girl's statement was true. The dresses were intensely fady and dingy-looking, only one seeming to have a gloss of newness about it, and that was not as clean and tidy as it might have been. She paused in her search a moment, silently wandering if she could possibly substitute something for this occasion. Myrtle and Mary were larger than Angel, and Vivian was much smaller, so there could be no recourse to their wardrobes, though they had ever so many fresh and dainty dresses. To alter one of these, or to make a new one, was entirely out of the question, at this late hour, so, perceiving no possible way to remedy the sad affair, Mrs. Read was almost as deeply perplexed as Angel was grieved. In fact, she was so deeply touched by the girl's grief, that it was impossible to suppress the tears that came unbidden to her eyes. How she did wish to satisfy the girl.

She spread out the simple-looking dress, the one with the gloss of newness, and turned it over and over in a most thoughtful way. There were ugly stains on the skirt, which readily disappeared

after a few applications of ammonia, and then the improved appearance of the dress, caused a winsome smile to ripple over the fair lady's face.

"This dress will look very well, Angel," she said, comfortingly, holding the fady dress up to view. "It isn't white, as the other children's dresses are, but you know that you haven't had time to prepare for this party. The young people, who are sensible, will understand it also, and excuse your odd attire. If you are only kind and polite all the day, you will enjoy the party, anyway. Such things go further, much further, than a multitude of fine dresses."

Angel cared little for moralizing just now. Moralizing was a small affair, and in her estimation, this occasion was too important to be given to small affairs; so she said: "But I ain't got no ribbons."

"That trouble can be speedily remedied. You can get all the ribbons you want, dear," she was assured, as Mrs. Read touched a button in the wall, which brought up a servant, immediately. A box of ribbons was ordered up, and when it was opened there was a grand exhibition of ribbons blue, ribbons red, ribbons white, and bright, fluttering ribbons of every conceivable color. Angel's delight and appreciation, as she viewed the brilliant colors, was unbounded. In half an hour she had an artistically arranged head, with a blue bow on each side. a soft, shining blue sash at her waist, and crimped

laces and blue ribbons at her throat. Admiring glances were cast at the reflection of herself, in the long mirror, while silently affirming that she looked more beautiful and more stylish than she ever had before.

Mrs. Read stood off, silently watching her maneuvers, instensely proud of the fact that Angel was satisfied with herself, for she had been greatly perturbed over the girl's grief; then she drew near, threw her arms across Angel's shoulders, hugged her up very closely, and said, in a tender, maternal way: "You will do all right for this occasion, pet. Vivian is to have a birthday party in two weeks, and then you shall have a dress that will cope with the most elegant on the ground."

Angel pressed the hand of her benefactress softly, and smiled very sweetly.

Angel was then led down stairs, into the drawing-room, already filled with exquisitely dressed and happy-hearted children, where she was unceremoniously introduced to all at once. The awkward girl felt greatly at sea in this room of superbly dressed and polished children, and knew not what to do with herself; but Mrs Read sought to relieve her timidity and awkwardness by remaining for a while, and acting as a semi-substitute for her in the gay conversation that flowed rapidly and effusively. Outside duties soon demanded Mrs. Read's personal attention, however, and then it was that the whole troop of chattering children, or, rather, the smallest and most indis-

creet of them, became wholly absorbed in Angel. A smiling group huddled around each one of the "young Reads," and interrogated whisperingly: "Who is she?" "How did she happen to come here?" "Is she going to stay?" "She looks dreadfully tacky," said a curly-headed little Miss in white silk and fluttering pink ribbons. This last remark was overheard by Angel, and from it she drew an idea of the trend of all their talk. Though she readily acknowledged the great contrast in their costumes, she felt most indignant at the conversation, and blushed quite angrily; but her mental rage was almost like a young tigress when Paul said, in a careless way: "She's an awful pauper, and mother just took her for a servant."

These words were uttered so loudly, doubtless with a wish to be heard, that every one in the room caught them distinctly.

Myrtle and Mary, extremely chagrined at her "tacky dress," did not deny the charge. They had foreseen their mother's unwisdom in keeping the girl, anyway, and would not budge a feather's weight to relieve her lowly condition; but Vivian, the beautiful vivacious Vivian, with a heart fluttering with a great sympathy for every needy object, instantly rose up in Angel's hebalf, as she had done on every possible occasion. She rather fancied the unpolished manners of the strange girl, and would stand firmly by her in spite of all ridicule; so. when Angel retorted to Paul's sar-

casm: "You told a false! You told a false! I'm not a servant; that I'm not," Vivian replied quite vehemently: "She's not a servant, either, Mr. Paul. My mother's her foster-mother, and she's going to make a lady of Angel; she said so."

"She just said it to please Angel and you," retorted Paul, tantalizingly.

"Hi! Joe and Precilla, stop your nonsense!" called one of the stalwart young gentlemen in white tie and gaiters.

"And let's be off to the Amphitheater," added Myrtle, who was commanding general for the occasion. The whole army of bright, frolicing children was soon marching to the splendidly decorated garden, the scene of inexhaustable attraction for the day, and where Angel was greeted by the loveliest sight that her eyes ever rested upon. The tall, aristocratic-looking Magnolia and Pine wove artistic, shady nooks here and there; the shell-graded pathways, on each side of which were sweet-scented, gay blooming flowers made a cross in the center of the grounds; in one of these squares was a translucent, high-flowing fountain, surrounded by a marble basin three yards in diameter, in which were playing goldfish. The whole garden seemed a paradise simply alive with musical songsters, so thrilling and so numerous were the songs of birds; and, oh! Flowers! Flowers! Flowers! of every conceivable color and shape and name and fragrance; they nodded, they glistened, they smiled, and emitted the sweet-

est of aroma. So nodding, fresh-looking, and bouyant they appeared, that they must have been holding sweet converse, too, as were the children. No one could look on the magnificent scene without having such thoughts about

FLOWERS.

All over this beautiful world of our's,
  On mountain-tops, down in the valleys,
Near ancestral cities' sunny towers,
  In the lone and darksome alleys,
Like benedictions in silent glory,
  Speak they oft to the beauty-loving eye;
In language quaint, tell their own story—
  Sweet flower-tales, to the passers-by.

Through shady groves, by deep woodland passes,
  Round rifted rocks, high on the ledges,
In single files, in gay clinging masses,
  Bloom they and thrive as richest pledges
Of the all-wise Creator's tender care;
  For smiles of God are they to cheer the earth,
The sunless skies, all places of despair,
  Where ever these fragrant blooms have birth.

Inciting oft the tenderest care,
  In lowliest huts where the humble dwell,
Or in palatial homes, costly and rare,
  Of love's sweet secret they ope to tell;
Then last, by them grave respect we show
  To those we loved awhile and lost,
Gathering the rarest ones I trow,
  Counting never the pain or cost.

It was indeed a delightful scene, a never-to-be-forgotten scene, for the entire time of an experienced horticulturist was given to the beautifying of the grounds. The wonderful splendor of the place was a fair reminder of that wondrous

story in the Arabian Nights, where the lovely sister and two brothers lived, with a garden containing talking birds and singing trees.

Angel became so deeply absorbed in the rare attractions around her, that she sauntered alone, from place to place, weighing, mentally, the importance and beauty of every strange object that greeted her, and pronouncing it all a most exquisite arrangement. She was at least two hours in this reconnoitering, because many of the unique objects held her spell-bound for ever so long; then, with a heart simply bubbling with enthusiasm, she approached the other children. Her deep interest in the marvelous garden had erased from her memory the unpleasant things she heard in the house. During her two hours of most interesting inspection, the children had played golf, May Queen, Isabella, and many other interesting games.

To Angel's great astonishment, dinner was served in a gothic-playhouse, standing snugly in one corner of the garden, and which, because she had deemed it some kind of storeway hovel, had been entirely overlooked by her; but now, that she had discovered what it really was, she compared it to Solomon's Temple, in all its glory—of which she had heard Mr. Lidall speak—only this was a temple on a much smaller scale. She started in, to see where the priest went to offer sacrifices, and found a snug dining-room, containing a table large enough to accommodate

eight persons at once, besides some useful articles of furniture and bric-a-brac. Soft chintz curtains were at the windows, a brussels carpet, with flowers of blue baskets filled with roses and geraniums, covered all the floors of the house. One entire side of the dining-room wall was looking-glass, and on the heavily carved mantle vases and jardaneries filled with richest fragrant blooms, while the side window was rich with jasmine.

Angel went all around the house, and in every room. Then she clapped her hands melodramatically; it was so different from anything she had ever seen or dreamed of. "What would the Coley children say, to see such a house, such a play-house?" she asked herself in this moment of exultation, as memory carried her to the destitute home in which she used to live. She wondered what kind of a home they had now, anyway, and really wished that they could have such a delightful abode as she now possessed. She certainly had one most promising redeeming feature, a deep sense of gratitude for any kindness shown her, and this exalted virtue was the principal incentive to her becoming a real lady, a really inherent quality of her's. That horrid spirit of retaliation was her worst fault, and the reader must not condemn her too severely for that, but wait and see how her career ended.

There were enough children to fill the table four times, with one left to eat alone. One must sit down alone, to partake of the rich and sumptu-

ous repast with which the cook had loaded the table until it was ready to groan beneath its immense burden, and who would be this last one? No one would want to be, to be sure, but some one must be. Paul ventured to decide the matter by saying that Angel was too tacky to eat with the rest, that she was a servant, anyway, and ought to wait; and he finally ended his argument by saying that the rest were well acquainted, were good friends, while Angel was a total stranger to them all. He made a masterly argument (?) for his side.

"But the Book says, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for, thereby, some have entertained angels unawares,' " said the cook, grinning from ear to ear, as she hurriedly arranged the table.

"Isn't that unique? We will indeed entertain an Angel," said Mamie Hudson, deftly, clapping her hands in an excited way.

"But, Miss Cook, the Book doesn't say to entertain the angel at the first table, at the second, nor the third. They can be entertained at the twelfth table, as for that matter.. They must be entertained alone, for human folks are afraid of them—they are spirits," so Verna Franklin boasted, in her usual haughty tones. Verna was one of those high-spirited creatures, proud, finical, fanciful, and it was difficult to tell which was the sharpest, her tongue or her nose. She was never known, when expressing opinions, to

possess any particular regard for the feelings of any one.

Angel looked daggers at haughty Verna.

"But we have only one of the angels with us today, so let us eat. Judas was the twelfth disciple, and he was a devil, so I suppose he ate at the twelfth table," said Master Paul, dumping himself at the head of the table. For the lack of a better one, he would serve as host for the occasion. Others were invited to follow his example, enough to fill the table, and it made no difference who, only, as the Book didn't say when the "angels" were to eat, this one, in mortal robes, must be the last.

When the first table was filled Vivian declared, ironically, that they would cast lots, and see who was destined to be last. After voting, the lot was Angel's—the direct result of Master Paul's domineering, for none voted for her but Vivian. She could do nothing but silently acquiesce, though, with a spirit of dire rebellion. She would not have consented as readily as she did, perhaps, had it not been for the many delicious viands on the table, so worthy to be waited for; and, too, the novelty of the dinner—served so royally in a "beneficiant play-house," she said, was another strong motive in her consent to be last.

After the three tablesfull had done full justice to the luxurious meal, plenty was left for as many more. Angel sat down alone, and seemed really delighted to eat even in that way, in such a pic-

turesque place, until a mischievous lad began to tease her about "servants being the last to eat;" then it was that her blood began to boil with fury and retaliation. Her appetite being fully appeased, for she was ravenously hungry before dinner—to see such a table, in such a place, any one would have been hungry—her indignation mounted a high pedestal, and she resorted to the rudest sort of retaliation.

"You think you're everything because you have on such a fine dress; but you're a little thing, the smallest of a egg, and I'm as good as you," she said, in irascible tones, to Verna Franklin, who first proposed for her to eat last.

This cutting remark was quickly resented by half a dozen terrestrial cherubs, who quickly popped up in Verna's defense. "Good! Gooder! Goodest! Good servant; gooder servant; goodest servant," retorted a simple little man, with a mighty effort at pompous tones.

Angel was so deeply incensed at this seeming outrage, that she angrily snatched up a handfull of gravels, and tossed them, strait as a mark, at their nodding heads and flowing curls, for which she received a stinging box on the right cheek. With a loud, shrill cry, she quitted the garden, immediately, and never stopped, though she had a mind to resent some things thrown at her, until she had reached the quiet atmosphere of her own room upstairs.

Mrs. Read, deep in the intricacies of some

screntific-work, heard the scream distinctly, then the foot-steps on the stairs, and started, straightway, to investigate the trouble. Her first interview was with the children in the garden, after which, with a greatly agitated mind, she repaired to Angel's room. Pausing on the steps for a while, that her arder might cool down somewhat, and free her from excitement, she then proceeded to Angel's room. That lady was lengthwise, a favorite attitude of her's when in a petulant mood, on a Russian rug, and she was weeping convulsively. Hearing Mrs. Read's foot-steps, and recognizing them instantly, she buried her face in the rug, like a conscience-stricken culprit, who waited and feared some well-deserved punishment.

"And this is my Angel who promised to be good, and especially nice to-day," spoke Mrs. Read, reprovingly, but in tender, motherly tones, as she knelt beside the prostrate girl.

"But that gal hit me on the face, and it hurt," cried Angel, petulantly, as she tried to thrust a hand through the heavy rug on which she was lying.

"But didn't you throw some gravels first?"

"Y-e-s'm," quickly affirmed the agitated girl, for, with all her resentment, and dislike of opposition, she was a staunch defender of this kind of truth, so far as she apprehended it, even if that truth condemned her conduct most severely.

"Then you are the offender, Angel. Children

don't usually accept such offenses with serenity."

"I don't know what shrentity is, but I do know that them children 'sulted me first. They call me a servant, and all sich names, and had me to eat last, cause I's a servant." She paused a moment, then wringing her hands despairingly, continued: "I hate my life! I hate this taggy old world! I hate God for treating me so bad! I hate all them children 'cept Vivian!" she sobbed, mournfully, with a powerful emphasis on the word "hate."

Mrs. Read was deeply touched by the girl's despair, but said, reprovingly: "It is wrong, very wrong, to hate any one, Angel." She sought an easy position on the rug, by Angel's side, and proceeded: "It is also wrong to get angry, and resent wrongs. The golden rule is, 'do unto others as you would be done by.' Another Divine law is, 'If they smite thee on the right cheek, turn the left one also.' Try these rules for awhile, my dear, and see how they work. Let me tell you a little story, a story about a girl who tested these rules, and found them good enough to live by."

At this suggestion of a story, Angel instantly sat erect, crossed her hands behind her back, and had a look of wonderful expectancy in her dark, velvety eyes. Mrs. Read related a most interesting story the previous night, one that captivated Angel's fancy in a marvelous way, and, from henceforth, nothing would smoothe the ruffles

and frills from her mind like one of Madam's stories.

After a momentary pause, in which Angel's childish eagerness had been remarked, she proceeded: "When I was only fourteen years old my father put me in a girl's school, where it was almost impossible for the pupils to be managed, so rude and disobedient they were; but this sad state of affairs was little known beyond schooldom. If a girl happened to be docile and quiescent when initiated into the school, she soon caught the contagion, becoming, ere long, as ironical and manageless as the rest; and she usually caught the prevailing disease the first months, when her patience and endurance were weighed in the balance, and found wanting. It would have required a strong-minded and determinate girl, to have faced the sneers and persecutions there, and come out victorious, without a blemish on her fair character. To my own knowledge, though, one of this mold was initiated into the cults of this girl-school, and what a time she had keeping her feet out of the miry pits they dug for her.

"The extreme poverty of Jane's—I'll call her Jane for convenience sake—parents, at this period of her life, compelled them to use the greatest economy in dressing her; so her plain calico frocks, and "pauper shoes," as they were designated by the girls, were objects of constant ridicule by the up-to-date girls in the school. Because of limited school advantages, Jane was

backward in all her studies, for a girl of her age, and her manners were not those of the drawing-room society; so her costumes, her lessons, and her manners, were daily objects of the most heartless criticisms. It was sneer and jeer and ridicule on every side, until the girl was almost heart-broken.

"But what do you suppose Jane did? Do you think she resented those cruel taunts, or gave up in utter despair? If so, you are entirely mistaken. She did the very reverse of that. When they laughed at her dress and shoes she laughed also, as though she considered it a momentous joke. When they ridiculed her awkward manners, and her ridiculous lessons, she cajoled with them in a merry way. She acknowledged their superiority, but determined to outshine them in something, so she applied herself most studiously to her books, and, year in and year out, until her graduation, she lived so constantly with her books that she had not time for the small and petty affairs that wrecked the ambition of so many girls in the first few months of the school. As a result of her good nature, and the steady application to her books, she carried off the highest honors that any girl had ever received there. She won the confidence and highest respect of her teachers, and was loved and respected by all who appreciated learning and true worth.

"When Jane left school it was said that many tears of regret and sorrow followed her. But,

had she devoted her time to resenting wrongs, and indulging fits of anger, instead of improving her mind, she would never have reached such an influential and enviable position in the girl's school. But the beauty of it was that she did not consider her education complete and leave off further advancement when through school, but she kept striving for all the beautiful and useful things that could possibly be learned. She finally married a young man who was the best "catch" in the community, and now they live in a beautiful home."

"That must be you. You know such a heap, and have a gran-house, the beautifulest house I ever saw," said Angel, waving a hand enthusiastically, for she had seemed intensely interested in the story from the beginning.

Mrs. Read, knowing that it mattered not who the heroine of the story was believed to be, smiled benignly, and said, with perceptible pathos: "Thought the story would help you, dear. I know that you want to be a little lady some day, with a host of friends to cheer and love you, and there is but one way for you to reach such an enviable position. You must resolve to be good and true, to do your full duty in spite of difficulties, and fully determine to let no angry word proceed out of your mouth any day. A very wise man said: 'Pure words are like apples of gold in pictures of silver.' Such words are elevating to the speakers as well as to the listeners."

Angel drank in this admonition, with its deepest meaning, and when Mrs. Read finished speaking, she was sobbing quite despairingly.

"I know that you will resolve to do your best, Angel, and God will help you carry out that resolve, if you ask him!" and here she gently caressed the blonde hair, for Angel was sobbing in her lap as if her heart would break. The girl's grief was a good omen, and the good lady felt that her words were as "Bread on the waters, the fruits of which would be reaped many days hence."

"But God don't keer anything for me, Mrs. Read, dear Mother, and he won't help me."

You're mistaken, darling, he does care," in maternal tones.

"But he wouldn't a let the Gypsies take me from my home, if he had a keered," she moaned, tilting her head haughtily to one side, with a most defiant expression on her face—a never failing characteristic of her's when discussing this theme; then impelled by a different emotion, which came to her at rare intervals, she sobbed almost relentlessly: "Oh, my mother! My mother! My beautiful mother! Why don't you come to me? Why did God let me be taken from you?"

Mrs. Read lifted the head of the weeping girl, and clasping it to her bosom, said, tenderly: "Do not grieve so, darling. I will be a mother to you always, and love you as well as I love my own. You shall not want for anything, if you try to be

a good girl, no not even for love. Have faith and something may happen some day. You may have a long life before you, and you certainly have the opportunity to make it grand and beautiful. God gave you a good intellect, a vivid imagination, and now, if you will appreciate, and use to the best advantage, these splendid gifts, you will have cause, some day, to bless where you now curse. All things are promised to the faithful, to those who look to God for help, and if you will quit repining, and cultivate a beautiful faith in seeing your sweet mother some day, your labors will be richly rewarded."

The girl looked up with shining eyes, and said in rapturous tones: "I believe you know; I do! I do! Oh, I want to have faith, and be good and true. Will you help me? Will you tell me anything that I can do, or say?" and she laid a hand caressingly on Mrs. Read's arm, as she had the previous day, when making such an earnest appeal to remain in this beautiful home. Fire sparkled in her glowing eyes, and Mrs. Read rightly construed it as a reforming flame, that would, ere long, light her way into untrodden paths.

The benevolent woman was over-joyed at this childish declaration, for it seemed to have come from a touched and bleeding heart,and to voice the true sentiments of the change in her. The face, irradiated with a new and beautiful earnestness, expressed, far more than her words had, that she

really meant what she said. She took the shining face between her hands, kissed her gently, and then said: "Thank you for your promise, dear. I know that you will be true enough to keep it. I verily believe, Angel, that your first duty is to seek forgiveness for throwing those gravels. When we wrong people we must ask their forgiveness, however silly they may have treated us prior to that wrong."

To Mrs. Read's utter astonishment, Angel rose to her feet immediately, and, without a single explanatory word, she swept swiftly down the steps. By the time she had risen from the rug, the enthusiastic girl was in the garden, with a smile, as bright as the sunshine itself, glowing all over her beautiful face. Though they were in the midst of a new game, some of the children paused to look at the wonderful change that had been wrought in the girl's face. Several of them, however, yet maintained a haughty demeanor toward her, looked at her resentfully, winked at each other knowingly, in such a manner that she was almost persuaded to relinquish her noble purpose. As she thought of their taunts and sneers, a mighty struggle raged in her heart for a moment, but her better impulses, those that had been so thoroughly awakened by Mrs. Read, eventually came to the rescue, and she said, as briskly as her tongue could utter the words: "I did you all wrong just now, when I threw those gravels; will

you forgive me?" Her voice broke down, and her eyes filled with sparkling tears.

The appeal fell like a clap of thunder, on a clear day, among this group of gay and thoughtless children. The game broke off abruptly, and some of them stared at Angel with incredulous eyes.

"Let's not forgive her; she's nothing but a servant," declared Paul, tauntingly.

For an instant dire revenge raged in Angel's breast, but Mrs. Read's wise advice appealed to her afresh, and, chocking back the angry words she wished to say, she gave vent to a flood of tears.

"For shame, shame! Paul—Paul Read," said Mary, reprovingly, for her cold heart had been touched by the girl's grief.

Ah! those girls were more sympathetic than they have been given credit for, because no strong impelling motive to touch their sympathy had yet been brought to bear upon them. Girls and boys, too, usually, are sympathetic creatures, when occasion calls for their sympathy, but the most of them are ever ready to resent wrongs. Half a dozen of them rushed to Angel's side, and said: "Yes, we forgive you, Angel, freely. We did you wrong also, and want you to forgive us."

"And I want you to forgive me for boxing your ear," said a pretty little ribbon-haired Miss, on the extreme side of the play-ground.

"I wish my name was Angel," said one of the

genteel little gentlemen, "then I could ask folks to forgive me. Angels are all's good fairies, aren't they?"

"Anybody can forgive or ask forgiveness, who wants to. Mother says forgiveness is an acquired art, and that any one, who wants to, can learn it," said Myrtle, discreetly, swinging her mallet to and fro in the air.

"Humpty-te-dumpty-tay, old mother-hubbard's in the play! Get in the ring, and let us sing, 'Vicy and Voco, Don Q and Rosco,' " cried Master Linnie Franklin, in his high-keyed soprano voice, and then there were such peals of laughter that the birds stopped singing to listen.

Angel was happier than she had been since entering this home, because a tender feeling of fellowship now existed between herself and the other children, and she engaged in their games with as much interest and enthusiasm as though there had been no disruptions between them. This was also the turning point of Mary's attitude toward her, for they were henceforth the best of friends.

"Now let's play Romeo and Juliet," said one of the boys, with an air of importance which said he knew a great deal about the famous drama.

"Yes, let's, and I'll be Juliet," quickly replied Mary.

"And I'll be Romeo," spoke Algernon Franklin, the most important dude of the season, in his own estimation at least, and whose eyes the girls

said looked both ways at once. But it was his self-conscious importance that caused them to make the assertion.

"Then I'll not be Juliet," returned Mary, petulantly, with a saucy little curve in one corner of her mouth.

"But we'll be the three musicians, and make the birds wonder at our dischords," affirmed one gentleman and two ladies, as they gathered up the violin, harpiscord, and mandolin.

"And I'll be the wonderful Lady Roland," chirped Vivian, who had heard the wonderful story about the beautiful woman's talent and undaunted courage leading her to the guillotine.

"You are indeed very progressive. Lady Roland isn't in the play at all. She lived more than a thousand years after Shakespeare wrote the play," Jack Hudson informed them, as he peered over their heads from his high perch on the playhouse.

Myrtle looked at him with a certain spark in her dark eyes, and said: "Ahem! I think you'd better review your historical vocabulary. You've certainly made a wonderful stride in one of the dates, at least."

"What's a date, pray? We eat one, and then don't feel that we touched it."

So they hummed, dawdled and clattered, seemingly unconscious of the swift flight of time, until some very common and modern play had to be adopted as the farewell piece. They played until

the sun hung low in the western horizon, and then there was an interesting scamper for gloves and hats, after which, amid effusive thanks for the favors of the day, and grateful adieus, the gay little band dispersed, feeling that it was one of the happiest days of their lives.

The Read children were as jolly until bedtime that night as they had been in the midst of the festival. It was "Papa this" and "Papa that"—for papa was not at home in the afternoon—and "Papa, won't we have it jolly, though, when Vivian's birthday comes?" And the doting father was as much interested in these childish stories as he had been in making a "hit" in a bargain that day; and he laughed good-naturedly, caressed their rosy cheeks, and said he wished they might always have such a good time.

Angel was put in the governess' charge, with every advantage possessed by the other children, and favorable reports of her good behaviour, wonderful industry, and rapid advancement, frequently came to Mrs. Read's ears, much to the satisfaction of that gentle lady. Nothwithstanding the girl's obstinacy and lack of training, Mrs. Read had, the very day she entered her home, credited her with noble, inate qualities, which, with proper care and cultivation, could be developed into something quite beautiful. Now, since such favorable reports had reached her, it was quite evident that her judgment was correct; and her motherly interest in Angel increased with her

daily advancement. She was as tenderly regardful of her every whim as though she was her own flesh and blood, always providing as carefully for her comfort and pleasure as she did for her own children. It is needless to say that Angel had a hard struggle in rising above her hate and her tendency to resent wrongs. Oh, the bitter trials the dear girl had, too many to relate in a short story like this. That awful, awful temper was so hard to conquer, but, with a loving hand to guide her she did exceedingly well.

When Vivian's birthday arrived, the events of which were similar to those of the garden-party, Angel had a superb white dress, with ribbons and laces that eclipsed all the rest for beauty and elegance of style, except Vivian's; because Mrs. Read had determined that no fault should be found with the costume of her adopted daughter, that day. She had discovered, too, that Angel was not made egotistical by beautiful dresses, and they heightened her beauty to such an extent that she looked more like a wonderful fairy than a real little girl. Angel was so greatful to her kind benefactress that she exerted her utmost skill in trying to please her, and manifesting every possible appreciation, often exhibiting more deference and kindness toward her than her own charming daughters; consequently, she was loved as a daughter.

Angel never failed to visit the stable daily, rain or shine, to look at the fat and well-trained horses. They were objects of unwavering inter-

est every day. The beautiful black, Itchel, was haughty-looking and volatile, but she liked to see his dodging pranks, liked to see him elevate his head and look proudly down on her. Boscal's sleek, brown coat was indeed beautiful, but he was altogether too pranky and spirited for her ever to think of mounting, though the other girls never hesitated to do so. The aristocratic Boscal was a great beauty, and a great favorite of theirs, but they were well-trained horsewomen, and she had had such little experience with horses. Gidone, the quiet, meek-eyed Gidone, with his plateau-like back and plump flanks, was the one she liked best for all practical purposes. She could bridle him anywhere, then mount him from the fence, chicken-hovel, or any other place where his soft, broad back could be reached.

One day Angel and Mary, the former on Gidone, the latter on Boscal, had just the livliest gallop over the turnpike to the village; and an attractive couple they were, in their unique riding habits. Boscal, being more brisk and energetic in his movements, kept constantly in advance of Gidone, in spite of Mary's efforts to check him. To tell the plain truth, Mary did not care to supercede Angel in anything these days. They had been together three years now, and she had conceived a sisterly affection for the orphan. Paul was still at variance with her at times, insisting that he didn't like girls at all. " 'cept my sisters," yet friendship between himself and Angel was

gradually warming. But this happy state existed between Angel and all the rest. When it was discovered that she was really a talented young lady, that she had a wonderful aptitude for language, for all the useful sciences and for classical music, their admiration for the girl was strengthened immensely. Mary, especially, called her an "Angel" of the celestial sort. She adored where many would have envied, for Angel was fast gaining ground on her—leaving her far behind.

On this eventful day, as they swept past old fields where wild flowers grew in richest profusion, they discussed botany with perceptible interest and enthusiasm; and when they passed through a delightfully foliaged grove, where feathered songsters were holding high carnival, they discussed ornithology with as much fondness and zest as two superior connoissuers in bird-life; then harborology, with the trees and shrubs, the emerald grasses and dancing sunrays, came in for their just meed of consideration. They were dear lovers of the beautiful, inanimate world, were these two young ladies, who had many profitable discussions in their rides and walks.

The loungers, on the streets, ventured many a guess as to the value of the blooded horses—the finest in the country, they said. Horse-culture was a hobby of the Colonel's, and his admiration for fine stock was second only to that for his wife and children. So these loungers argued:

"Those two are a fair sample of what his stable contains."

Then their attention reverted to the riders. "Mrs. Read's foundling is getting to be quite a lady," declared one of the loungers, eyeing the neat form and faultless attire of Angel, as the two girls entered a shop near their lounging-garrison.

"I should say as much. Dame Rumor gives her more pluck and energy than all the Read youngsters put together," replied a brother lounger, as he sent a whiff of smoke curling into the air above his head.

They did their shopping cleverly, started back home immediately, and were more than halfway, in the delicious grove where they had discussed harborology, when Boscal became frightened at the prancings of a stray dog, gave a dangerous leap, and on the ground the fair rider lighted, or fell rather.

It was a fearful fall, and Angel, half-frightened out of her wits, sprang from her saddle as blithely as a bird on the wing. Her's was a dangerous spring also, but she heeded it not, and her unconsciousness of danger or harm must have served as wings to uphold and support her.

"Are you hurt, darling? Oh, Mary, are you hurt?" she cried in helpless despair, as the extreme pallor of the lifeless-looking face appealed to her in a touching way. "You are dead! Oh, you are dead!" she wailed, while wringing her

hands most frantically; then she knelt beside the prostrate form, gently chafed her face and hands, and wept most bitterly.

Her gentle ministrations failed to restore consciousness, however, and, in utter despair, she started homeward in a wild run, for Gidone, always willing to submit to Boscal's leadership, had trotted off after him; but, before going very far, she met the groom accompanied by the whole family, for the sudden appearance of the riderless horses had alarmed them greatly. They found Mary sitting erect, but with a look of intense pain in her lovely face. She was trying to remove her shoe, for her ankle was badly sprained, and was swelling most rapidly.

"Thank God that it is no worse," cried the fond mother, in grateful tones, while removing the shoe. The groom, with the help of the others, carried her home, and for many days she was confined with a painful foot, but bore her suffering cheerfully and heroically. During all those days Angel was constantly by her side, making her comfortable or reading entertaining books. Paradise Lost, Pilgrim's Progress, and Ben Hur, were three of their favorite books, and portions of these were read every day. This season of study and reflection was beneficial to both, strengthening their ties of friendship and affection, and increasing their faith in the "eternal vereties." Especially was the discipline good for Angel, confirming her patience, and augmenting her belief that

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

Her mind often wandered back to the day of her startling reception by Nannie, Paul, and the other children; but circumstances changed most speedily, and how grateful she had ever been for such a home, such parents, and for such a brother and sisters. At first Vivian was her only friend, but when all got to be her friends, when all saw her true worthiness, it was difficult to tell which treated her most kindly, but Mary, who was nearer her size, got to be her chum and confident.

Angel had been in the Read mansion five years when a gentleman from St. Louis, a Mr. Markham, happened to spend the night there. He and Col. Read had been quite intimate friends for several years. They were Masons, had often met in the Grand Lodge in St. Louis, also on the train, and at occasional festivals, liked each other very much, which caused a tender friendship to spring up between them. Mr. Markham had often promised the Colonel that, should he be providentially, or otherwise, thrown in his community, he would certainly avail himself of the extended hospitality of his home. This promise had been remembered, and was faithfully redeemed, when he met with a hearty and cordial welcome, for which all grand southern homes are noted. He found his friend to be a whole-hearted and most genial host, while Mrs. Read's rare intelligence and pleasant manners pleased him exceedingly.

The young people, all except Paul, who was now in college, were sauntering on the well-kept lawn, at the close of an afternoon's visiting-tour, and did not make their appearance until supper-time; so the strange gentleman was introduced to them at the supper-table. As was his custom—he was an acute observer of new faces, and a good judge of human nature—he scrutinized the young ladies quite critically, and pronounced Angel the most queenly and elegant-looking, as well as the prettiest, of the quarto. She was exquisitely dressed in pale-blue silk, possessed the royal air of a queen, and, too, as he observed her more attentively, he discovered that she bore a close resemblance to a friend's wife, a lady whom he admired very much for her beauty and gentle disposition. Perhaps this resemblance augmented Angel's beauty, in his estimation; however that was, though, she was, in his judgment, surpassingly beautiful, and her manners were faultless.

Everyone present remarked his attention to Angel, and was truly glad when he dived into the contents of his plate. The "Fatted sheep" instead of the "fatted calf," had been slain to commemorate this visit, and the humorous part of it was that the victim was "Nannie," who had grown into a six-year- old sheep. She had grown so rude and spiteful that it was not at all safe for the children to enter the field in which she was kept, so the luxury of a fat and delicious mut-

ton greeted Mr. Markham at the table. The sheep's identity was to be kept from the young people, but an old "black mammy," to whom the secret had not been confided, said to Angel: "Yo needn't fear dat sheep 'gin, honey; case dey's cookin' 'im fur sepper." Forewarned is forearmed, so Angel, when the delicious-looking chops were offered her, politely declined them; so did all the girls, to the astonishment of the elders. They wanted none of Nannie, who had frightened them so often.

Supper ended, the young ladies were invited into the parlor, to sing and play for Mr. Markham, for their father was so proud of their attainments that he wanted his friend to discover them as soon as possible. They sang well, and played most skillfully the "Star Spangled Banner." "The Watch on the Rhine" and "The Stars and Stripes Forever." They had all the latest masterpieces in music and their rendering of them pleased the strange man intensely. He was not a musical scholar himself, but a thorough technical analysis of music is not necessary in order to the enjoyment of first class music. A love for music, much experience in listening and appreciating tones, and an eager mind, will prove sufficient for the full enjoyment of music. These qualifications Mr. Markham possessed, and, as he half-reclined on a sofa—he had set up a claim to fatigue on his arrival—he ventured many appreciative remarks to Col. Read; and when he said: "I have the key

to your sunny disposition, Colonel. What man, with four such beautiful and accomplished daughters, would not be happy?" These words were so agreeable to the Colonel's vanity that he could hardly behave himself.

But the finale of Mr. Markham's interest and enthusiasm was reached when Angel played, "Come Home, Beloved," "Immortal Love," and others. Her touch was exquisite, and, considering that she had studied music only five years, her skill was a marvel to them all. Her music had great warmth of feeling, a richness and fascination of tone, that touched the deepest chords of every human heart. Her greatest genius was exhibited in the last song, the following:

STAR OF MY SOUL.

Star of my soul, by thy light I see,
  Shine thro' the day, and thro' the night;
Lead me, oh lead me, onward lead me,
  Hopeless I'd be without thy light.

Shine thro' the deserts that I must tread,
  Shine, and guide my faltering feet
Through the dreary waste. I have no dread,
  With thy sweet light, these deserts to meet.

I ask not indubitable sight,
  Bear faith and love up high, so high,
Up where thy art the living light,
  Far, far above the starry sky.

Her whole heart was in this song, and when she came to the last verse, to one she had added to the song herself,

Lead me, oh lead me, sweet star of my soul,
To the long lost, and sacred spot,
Where my heart's treasures I may behold—
Deny me not this, oh deny me not!

she succumbed to an overwhelming emotion, burst into tears, and quitted the room. The song always affected her in this way, though she had hoped to be strong on this occasion. The others caught the deep feeling that flooded her heart, and great solemnity reigned for a while. After lingering in the room for a short social chat, the other young ladies bade the elderly people good-night, and retired. Then it seemed to Mr. Markham that a great light had suddenly vanished from the room, which calamity caused him to be most rudely reticent for a season.

The next morning, as Angel and Mary—these two young people had grown to be inseparable chums—confronted Mrs. Read in the back hall, Angel, with unmistakable interest in her tones, inquired: "Who is that Mr. Markham, anyway, Motherdy?" Since her long stay in this wealthy and aristocratic family, where wealth, learning and pedigree, were held in high esteem, she had conceived a wonderful leaning toward distingue people, and wanted all the history she could possibly obtain concerning them.

"He's an intimate friend of Col. Read's, from St. Louis. He is a most estimable gentleman, of wealth, intelligence, and unbounded influence in the city; so the Colonel says," was the smiling reply.

"He's most unhandsome, but an awful dude I believe, and quite meddlesome," laughed Mary, who was a self-conscious young lady, and blushed quite modestly when unusual attention was given her. But Mary was none other than Mary, and the elegant Madam knew exactly how to construe her little "odd sayings."

Mr. Markham's interest in Angel was renewed at the breakfast-table, where his admiring glances and casual remarks were yet more frequently remarked by the others. She was indeed so like another—so—so—he could hardly concentrate his thoughts sufficiently to tell what it was. He even tried to make himself believe that she was not in the least related to this family, because there was no family resemblance, none whatever; but, bah! —what was he thinking about, anyway? It is strange how the most practical of people sometimes suffer their imaginations to indulge wonderful flights of fancy; yet, it was the other thought that he dwelt on most—the girl's wonderful personality. She had a sweet, musical voice, and her smile was like the golden sunshine, so bright and genial it was. "Her name, too, suits her nature," he said to himself, as he mentally compared them.

Angel was not at all unconscious of his glances, of his seeming interest in herself, and was exceedingly modest, often unusually reticent, in his presence, but that was an additional charm to her many estimable virtues.

Contrary to his intentions of the previous day, Mr. Markham remained as a guest in the Read home until late that afternoon, when he left on some business pretext, but not without a promise to return the next night, on his way back to St. Louis. He secretly avowed himself to be in the most hospitable home it had ever been his pleasure to enter. There he met congenial spirits, and the entertainment was so inspiring and soul-cheering, that he was loth to leave such a satisfying and luxurious retreat; yet, after a second night there, duty compelled him to bid them adieu. However, before taking his final leave that morning, he committed a secret to Col. Read's keeping, until the arrival of the proper time to divulge it.

"You promised one time to grant me a favor, anything I might ask of you, and you remember it?" he said, while pressing the other's hand in a final adieu.

Col. Read was thoughtful, twirling his mustache quite briskly; then, instinctively discerning what was coming, there was a momentary arching of his prominent brow, as he responded, solemnly: "I think I have some recollection of such a promise."

"Thank you," said the other gratefully. "I didn't know then that I would ever have cause to presume upon your kindness, but, since coming to your home, I have decided to avail myself of the privilege so gratuitously offered. I would like, if it meets your honored approval, to—to corre-

spond with your—daughter, Miss Angel," he stammered, in serious tones, plunging into the very heart of the matter at once.

This was the Colonel's first conjecture anent the request, so he was not the least surprised when it came, but there was a loftier arching of the brow as he replied: "If Angel was my daughter I would consider myself and her greatly honored by your request, my friend; but I must now apprise you of the regretful fact that she is not my daughter, neither is she any blood relation of ours whatever. Five years ago she came to us a homeless waif; through pity we adopted her, and have provided for her, in every way, as we have for our own children."

Mr. Markham did not seem overmuch astonished at this announcement, but he remained in a meditative mood for some minutes, after which he asked, in interested tones: "And you know nothing of her parentage?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing. She claims to have been stolen by Gypsies, who took her to the far West. She seems to remember when she was stolen, has vivid recollections of her mother, but the most surprising part of her history is, that she forgot, entirely, where she lived and her father's name. In some unaccountable way, when eight years old, she fell into the hands of some relations of Coley's, a poor renter who lived in this community, and they sent her to him. When he left for Texas, five years ago, he sent her to my

home, and we have done the best we could for her."

For the first time during this conversation, Mr. Markham exhibited a little nervousness, a little agitation, rose to his feet, crossed his hands behind his back, and walked to and fro across the room many times. Then, with a look that meant more than words ever could, he paused, facing his friend, and said: "She must have been well-born, and possessed of much by inheritance. It would be a matter of absolute impossibility for one to acquire, in five years, that which but few learn in a life-time, where not gifted by inheritance. Of course environments and teachers count for much, only—"

"My opinions coincide with yours, exactly," responded the other, who had been so thoughtful as to be unconscious of the other's unfinished speech; then he rose also, and they walked out together, while Col. Read continued: "Angel is a perfect lady, and my honest opinion is that she is the daughter of a lady. If living, the parents have my utmost sympathy, and, though I love her as I do my own, I would gladly restore her to them."

They had now reached the gate, where the groom had been impatiently holding Mr. Markham's horse for some time. At the gate they had a secret consultation, a knowledge of which was unlawful except for those two—until a certain time in the future. Then they shook hands warm-

ly, after which the much appreciated visitor mounted his horse and rode rapidly away.

Col. Read kept the secret confided to him most faithfully, but, three days after that interview, a splendid equippige stopped at the gate, when a tall gentleman, and a richly attired lady, alighted. They were first seen by Mrs. Read and Angel, from a front window, where their deft fingers were deep in some embroidery work. As if by some sudden inspiration, on seeing the queenly-looking lady, Angel's face lighted up most luminously, and, clapping her hands gleefully, she cried with ecstatic voice: "I do believe that is my own dear mother and father!" and she bounded out of the house as swiftly as a bird on the wing.

Mrs. Read was first astonished at Angel's audacity; then she was spell-bound, and last she stood thinking seriously. Why did the girl have such thoughts? For there had been no time at all for theorizing, no time to think, "They are strangers, and are just as apt to be my papa and mama as any body else," no, there had been no time for such thoughts, but, the very moment that her eyes flashed on them, she uttered those astonishing words. It was an instinctive conclusion, or an event for which she had been ready any time, because she had been expecting it.

On reaching the hall-door, after giving Angel ample time to ascertain the truth, Mrs. Read saw that the girl was clasped in the lady's arms, while

all out-of-doors seemed filled with weeping and cries of rejoicings. Mr. Pembroke, for that was their names, looked silently on, with cheeks thoroughly saturated with happy tears, and his heart was so utterly filled with gladness that he found it impossible to say a word. Angel's face was buried against her mother's breast, fearing to withdraw one inch, lest it should prove to be a dream or delusion of some kind. So exceedingly great was their happiness at finding each other, that they were wholly oblivious to their environments, to the flight of time and all else, and just remained in the yard, rejoicing, and exchanging grateful words of appreciation and comfort at finding that which had been lost.

Growing impatient, and absolutely unable to wait longer for her share of joy in this happy union, Mrs. Read rushed out to them, and, when introduced by Angel, she was warmly embraced by the girl's mother. She had been informed, fully and unreservedly, and that by Mr. Markham, of this good woman's maternal kindness to her daughter. For a few moments they mingled their tears; then, holding each other's hand, the following conversation took place:

"After seeing you any one would have identified her; there is such a close resemblance," sobbed Mrs. Read, while brushing happy tears from her eyes. In spite of the fact that she loved Angel most dearly, she would gladly give her back to

these hearts which must have bled and ached so long for her.

Here Angel pushed back her sleeve, and pointed to a brown mark just below her elbow; then her mother said: "Beside my own instinct, and the close family resemblance, that was all the evidence I needed. That spot must have been a wise provision of fate, in view of all that was to befall her. Mr. Markham said that your "Angel," smiling graciously, "had been stolen by Gypsies, and that was sufficient evidence to incite investigation."

"Mr. Markham? Well! Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Read in great bewilderment, as she began to wonder if he was not a detective still in search of Angel; but she said aloud: "Then it was true about the Gypsies taking her from home?"

"There was never the least doubt about it. She was seen at the yard gate five minutes before they passed; but the way they conveyed her away was almost a miracle, for search was instituted half an hour after they passed. But—oh, I'm so glad at finding her, that the other part seems like a dream," and she gathered Angel, who had been caressing and fondling her father, in a close embrace, and vowed that it would be almost impossible to let her beyond sight again.

When the first wild wave of exuberant joy had swept over them, and their senses had returned to their present, practical needs, they repaired to the house; but words are entirely inade-

quate to portray the great emotional waves of gladness and gratitude that swayed the hearts of these three during the remainder of that afternoon.

That night Mrs. Pembroke gave a full history of the times and circumstances when Angel was stolen by marauding Gypsies, of their long, untiring search for her, and of the many heart-pangs at the abandonment of hope; after which Mrs. Read gave a beautiful portrayal of the girl's life since entering her home, dwelling most eloquently on Angel's talent, her virtues, and wonderful advancement, instead of her own unparalleled work for the girl; but of that they were now fully aware, as she herself was sufficient evidence, even if Mr. Markham had been silent about it. Their gratitude was too deep and exalted for words. They offered her abundant remuneration for her labor of love, but the gratitude they had already exhibited was worth more than ever so many dollars and cents; in fact, Angel had rewarded them full well for all they had ever done for her. Mrs. Read had said to herself, and thousands of times, that she was truly glad that Angel was not sent to an Orphan's Home, or a Mission School—she had been such a blessing to them.

The next morning, when Angel was carried away, the hearts of those left behind were rent in twain. The girls were so perturbed over the separation, that they cried themselves sick. The fond parents tried hard to reconcile them to the

inevitable, but failed most signally. They were promised frequent visits to and from St. Louis, but that was not like being together all the time; yet they knew it was necessary for them to be satisfied with it.

Mr. Markham, who was president, as well as the largest stockholder, of the firm of "Markham, Pembroke, and Company," was exceedingly rejoiced when his friends brought Angel back with them.

GATHERING FLOWERS.

"The poem, 'Flowers,' in Angel, was simply exquisite. The sentiments, as I pass among these flowers, wring thrillingly in my ears until now," spoke Bertha, while Miss Claire, Cathy and herself, were culling flowers one bright, fresh morning to fill all the vases and jardanieries about the house.

Miss Claire's appreciation of the eulogy was shown by a winsome smile, and she explained, warmly: "There is something wonderful in the adoration given to flowers; they come as gifts to gladden the hearts of the living, and then they are placed as a last and loving tribute to our beloved dead. However used, they are a beautiful revelator of Him who spoke them into existance. No wonder that Longfellow could write so touchingly:

"'Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in these stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us,
Stands the revelation of his love.

'Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours;
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth, these golden flowers.'"

"That is indeed lovely," admitted Bertha, in glowing terms. "Longfellow did make such beautiful word-pictures of nature. I think I love all grand objects of nature as well as he did, but I couldn't produce a single verse of poetry to save my life. Oh, you laugh at me, but it's the living truth, for I've tried it."

Miss Claire laid a handfull of flowers on the grass, yet sparkling with the morning dew, and said, with a smile: "It is said that poets are born, not made, and yet I presume that the gift of poesy would be worthless without painstaking cultivation. Whether we can write poetry or not, though, we can all live poetic lives, and it is indispensable that we live them in as much as we can; then and only then are our lives crowned with beauty, justice, and love. For example, in many cases, we must learn to place a rose-petal on our reflections of people who criticise us, than to meet them on halfway ground with their own cruel weapons, and this we would do if we knew what silly things cause criticisms sometimes."

The conversation was getting to be very uninteresting to Cathey, because she did not comprehend it, so, gathering up all the fragrant blooms she had culled, she rushed to Miss Claire's side, with a face radiantly outlined with inquisitiveness, and said: "Miss Claire, did you write that beautiful 'Flowers' in Tennessee?" If poetry could have appealed to Cathey's heart at all, it would have been that which sang of the glory and

sweetness of flowers, for they held the second place in her emotional heart.

"No, dear, I wrote that only a few days ago."

"I wondered if the flowers in Tennessee are just like they are here."

"I opine that you could write a still lovelier poem on flowers in that picturesque little hollow where you lived. Mother told me that you said that it was a perfect little poem within itself. Hi! Hi!" said Bertha, with a comical smile on her upturned face; then she added: "Dear Miss Claire, do write a cute little sonnet on that blessed little hollow! You have such an immortal regard for the spot that I'm sure you could write a poem on it as thrilling as the most ingenius epic."

"Things of that sort do not usually come at one's bidding, Bertha; at least I've never found it so. Professional writers may be able to jot down anything at a moment's notice, but it is different with those whose thoughts run mostly in other channels. Unless it has been misplaced, I think I can produce a sonnet on Tennessee, that will probably answer your purpose."

"Can you? Oh! can you? I know it's lovely! Mother and father were born in Tennessee, and I love the dear old state myself; so I'm so much gladder to get a poem on blessed old Tennessee," declared Bertha, in a pompous way, as her face lighted up quite radiantly; then she added: "Let's go in; I'm sure we have enough flowers to fill every empty jar on the place."

Her orders were obeyed, peremptorily, but it was almost noon-day before those elegant vases ever smelled the sweet aroma of those lovely flowers. It was not floral ornaments that possessed Bertha's attention just at this time, but a poem in which she believed that Tennessee must be highly ornamented, and the governess was severely teased until it was produced. It had been placed away carefully, she had forgotten where, and was compelled to rumage through all the contents of her bookcase before finding it.

Bertha waited, impatiently of course, lending a helping hand when necessary, and when their efforts were at last crowned with success, she grasped the manuscript eagerly, waved it banteringly above her head, while dancing arily around the room. Then retreating to some quiet nook, she unfolded the sheet, somewhat yellowed by time and use, and read:

TENNESSEE.

"Thy sunkissed hills, all decked about
With stately trees and foliage green,
With flowerets gay worked in and out
Thro' the queer 'Shade and Sunshine Screen,'
Look nimbly down on beauteous plans,
On softest emerald meadow-lands,
O'er magnificent fields of waving grains,
And pellucid water strands.

"Splendid, thrice splendid thy cities are,
For wealth, for refinement, and art,
With great enterprises reaching quite far,
To distant towns that engage in the mart,
United by boat and by railway lines,

With the old-fashioned country stages,
Not wholly ignoring more ancient times,
Yet keeping with progressive ages.

"Kine, myraids, roving o'er verdant hills,
With fowls, great herds, and flocks so fair,
Fertile fields, orchards, gardens—each one fills
A storehouse with treasures quite rare,
A varied and munificent store
To gladly share with sister states;
While envy, thy rare gifts more and more,
Into helpful love translates.

"Ornamenting thy lowlands, on crescent hills,
By rich highways, near obscure streams,
Where unbounded hospitality instills
Charms sweeter than the fairest dreams,
Are homes of thy free and loyal ones,
Where industry, unity and love, are knit,
And hearts that first breathe in thy homes,
Are always justly proud of it.

"Among the great, and bravest of the brave,
Are thy hale sons, both fearless and true,
Whose profound wisdom, and loyalty, gave
To thee the glory that was due;
The glory in which thy loved daughters, fair—
—As thy time-worn records all prove—
Helped to inspire, and yet fully they share,
With deft homage and hearts of love.

"The seamstress, they who sow and reap the grain,
Or the lonely cripple on his cot,
Richest of benefits from thy glory do gain,
For the poorest wanderer is denied not,
Some share in thy munificent wealth—
The material gifts, the treasured name,
The refreshing fountains of health,
Rich blessing go to all the same.

And graves thou hast we'd not forget,
Graves many, of the fair and noblest dead,
Who fought so valiently, and who wept
A lofty cause, and died instead—
Here and there a moss-covered heap,

On a hilltop, down in a glen,
While bright heavenly visitants keep,
A quiet vigilence over them.

"Then hoist thy banner, oh Tennessee,
Thy banner with ensigns of peace and love,
Of good-will, of hospitality free,
With great prosperity waving above,
March onward and upward, to greater conquests,
Upward! onward! to yet loftier heights,
Higher! higher! the watchword, and with zest,
Rise! rise! a beacon of lights."

When she had finished reading the poem, Bertha reposed in a thoughtful mood for a while, then she hastened with all possible speed to Miss Claire, who was now in the school-room, and expressed to her an abundance of gratitude for the privilege of reading the poem. "How you must have loved your dear old native state. I do think this is simply grand. It has caused me to love Tennessee, the native state of my parents, more than ever I loved it before. I even love my own state better, because I now understand it better, and some day I hope to write just such a poem as this on my dear old Kentuck; but I really do want to see Tennessee and compare them first. Oh, that I could go there right to-day, and see the beautiful places described in the poem. I know it must be intensely picturesque," she finished, in rapturous tones, gripping her teacher's hand tightly, as an indication of her great ardor in the desire.

If Miss Claire had valued her poems as Bertha did, she would certainly have utilized more time

cultivating the talent, but it might have been well for her that she did not value them so. She made no reference to her crude work on this occasion, however, but merely said: "If you really have an eye for beauty, dear you will see it sticking out quite prominently on every object that greets your eyes. If you will only look for it, you will find splendid beauty all around you. Wherever the blue sky, the sun, the moon and stars, the distant hills, the trees and shrubs and flowers around us can be seen, we stand on beautiful ground; and if we fail to see and appreciate the beauty where we stand, we need not go abroad to hunt for it." There was a sparkle of humor in her eyes as she finished this speech.

Bertha lowered her head, feigning deep offence—as if Miss Claire didn't know that she looked for beauty everywhere, and every day; but soon her dark eye-lashes slightly arched again, and she said, quite meekly: "I'm sorry, oh my heart is indeed very sorrowful, because my imagination is so dull and unreceptive."

"Sorrow is good for the heart," laughed Miss Claire, merrily. "Sorrow is a mighty agency for attuning the heart to a love for the beautiful in nature and in art. It has brought many, very many, from the stolid, bleak regions of self-love, indifference, and in-appreciation, to a full and happy realization of the rarest beauty in their environments, in the lives of those with whom they come in daily contact, and to a greater faith

in the grand capabilities of their own souls, or lives."

Here the governess consulted her watch, then reached for the bell-cord, leaving Bertha in a worst bewildered state than ever. According to her modest way of reasoning, her teacher was fast discovering an abundance of her needs; yet more discoveries were being made on her own side. Since reading that first poem, "Language of the Stars," the governess had seemed like an exalted star to Bertha, and she was daily catching luring, gleaming rays from its light. The literary work of no one else, though it was much better, could affect her as did the crude efforts of her teacher. These common-place poems and stories were daily inspirations to her; and she lost not a ray of beauty they held. But study-time had arrived now, and her energetic mind was soon as deep in the problems of Ethical Science.

At noon, as was their daily custom, they gathered around the governess, each with an important question to propound, when convenient, for they rarely went at things in a sort of harum-scarum way.

"Oh, I liked 'At the Picnic' ever so much the best. From first to last it reminded me of "Twedle-de-dum' that we used to play so much," said the vivacious Cathey, after several questions had been propounded, and satisfactorily answered.

"I don't at all consider that the best," affirmed Bertha, in decided tones. "I think the best part

of that story was interrupted by those little show fanatics. It would have pleased me to have learned how they settled the 'King and Queen question; anyway, and then a knowledge of their genius to rule a kingdom in an orderly way would have been most acceptable. As for myself, I liked Angel much—"

"If she'd been a boy I'd a liked her too," interrupted Paul, quite pertly, mimicing the Eskimo war-dance.

"Much better I was going to say," Bertha went on, "and yet I experienced a trivial disappointment in that even. I have carefully read Shakespeare's drama, 'Romeo and Juliet,' and always had an unconquerable desire to see it reproduced on the stage. I was really delighted at the thought of seeing those children handle it. As for Lady Roland, I obtained my first knowledge of her from that story."

Bertha paused a moment, learned against the wall as a deep breath escaped her, and continued: "I do like to hear about good and grand people. I'm really hungering and thirsting for such knowledge. because I want to be good myself and want the foot-prints of others as guides for my erring feet. Then I'd like to know because I enjoy such knowledge, anyway. I'd like to have the biography of every eminent author, painter, or every great man or woman, in a nutshell. Miss Claire, will you please tell me something about Lady Roland?"

It was a pleasure to the governess to gratify any wish of Bertha's, or the other pupils, as for that matter, for in all her work, her motto was, "The highest good to the largest number." So she said, pleasantly: "Then, if we are to go into details like that, we must find a place to sit down," as she lead the way to an ancient-looking divan, under an eastern window. The little group huddled around her, reticent as mice, but with glowing fancies distinctly marked on their beautiful faces.

The happy historian began: "Lady Roland is quite a unique figure in French history, but I can give only a short sketch of her most eventful life. Her maiden name was Manon Jeanne Phlipon. She was born 1754, was the daughter of Gratien Phlipon, an ambitious engraver who lived in Paris. He was always poor, and his daughter, Manon, though ambitious for learning, did not have the advantages of the best schools. However, by her own self-exertions, she got to be a learned woman, and, it was said, far surpassed her great husband in talent and tact. From her earliest years she exhibited great aptitude for learning, and an ardent and enthusiastic spirit. She had a life long love for the works of Plutarch, Massillon, Montesquien, in fact, all the great authors of the day. From some of her authors, whom she read very much, she doubtless imbibed much of the wonderful firmness and boldness of daring that characterized her later career. Her

extensive learning, and grand personality, won for her the favor, after her marriage, of the most influential leaders of the popular movement. Indeed she was one of the most influential and noble women of the times.

"In 1781 she was married to Jean Marie Roland, a man of unusual mental acumen and nobility of soul; and, with him, she exercised a powerful influence over the destinies of France, after the outbreak of the Revolution. This began 1789, and the Rolands threw their lot in with the Girondists, a party of the advance, who fought for a Republic; a Republic France should be, and a Republic this party determined to have. Lady Roland was most enthusiastic for this, and gave her talent and influence to the accomplishment of this end. Her husband was a man or righteous political aspirations, wrote for the political papers, and she helped him in all this literary work, often writing full articles herself on the iminent needs of her country. Their writing, and work in general, stirred up intense wrath and hatred against them.

"In March, 1792, Roland was made minister of the interior, where he and wife, in a most influential position, worked wonders in the interest of their party. This cabinet of ministers was composed of Girondists, Roland's party, and they at once took up a resolute position against the sovereign's tyranical rule, and got dismissed for their pains. The Girondists, somehow, lost power about this time, and then Roland had to flee

to other parts for safety. Soon after his departure, his beautiful and talented wife was arrested, and thrown into the prison of the Abbaye, but was finally transferred to the Conciergerie. There she won the affections of the guards, who permitted her to have writing materials, and it was there that she wrote those memoirs so widely read. She was here sentenced to death, and, in 1793, she was carried to the guillotine. Before her had was struck off, she bowed before the clay stature of Liberty, in the 'Place de la Revolution,' and said: 'Oh, Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!' But she was immediately lead to the guillotine, and thus ended the life of a talented and courageous woman."

Bertha's eyes had filled with tears, and her lips trembled sensitively, as she said: "Ah, that was such a sad ending for such a noble and sweet lady." Then she sighed impressively, for she thought only of the woman's sad fate, and nothing of the awful wickedness of her murderers.

"But you should read that history for yourself, Bertha. The history of France, like that of our own country, is an interesting study. Nothing is more important than a knowledge of history."

"I do like to hear people 'talk history,'" she admitted, meditatively. "Did Shakespeare live in France also? From the way his name was connected with Lady Roland's, in the play, I drew an idea that their histories were in some way connected."

Shakespeare lived in England. He died there in 1616, about 177 years before the death of Lady Roland, in France. Children, with only a smattering knowledge of history, get off some comical mistakes simetimes," said Miss Claire, with a peculiar look at Paul and Cathey.

"I should say comical," laughed Bertha, as she quit her leaning posture against the wall, and glanced out the window. Then she faced her teacher, and continued: "I heard a college student say the other day, and he was a grown-up, too, that 'several of the northern states were settled by the French as early as 1195, and that the Englishmen's treatment of them was little less than treason.' But, jiffy-jiffy, as Paul says, I've no room to critices the ignorance of others, for, if called upon to produce a historical essay of any kind, I'm almost sure that it would be one of the seven wonders of the world."

"You claim wonderful genius for yourself," remarked the governess, in dubious tones, but with a funny little gleam in her large eyes.

Bertha's eyes dilated, instantly, and then a crimson spark flashed into her ruddy cheeks. "Oh, I didn't mean—didn't mean—what you thought; but I meant the almost tragical, comical aspect of the essay, the utter lack of historical knowledge, you know. It would be a sight to think about."

Miss Claire nodded slightly.

"But the last story was about a girl, and I don't like girl-stories," declared Paul, in authori-

tative tones. "The other was for Bertha and Cathey, and now I want a story all for myself."

"But I thought boys admired little girls, and were always anxious to hear good stories about them," said Miss Claire, as she took the plump cheeks of the little fellow between her hands.

"So far as I am personally concerned, Paul, you're entirely welcome to have all the next story to your most important self. If you'll promise to be satisfied then, and let Miss Claire write such as she pleases," spoke Bertha, decidedly.

"If she'll write a spankum good story about a boy, I'll be satisfied," affirmed Paul, in earnest tones.

"I think I have a good boy's story, 'Jeff's Education,' already, that will interest Paul exceedingly," said Miss Claire, whose further explanatios were drowned by Paul's wild declarations of gladness, while Bertha and Cathey looked sober enough.

Near the close of that day the governess was seen again, with her three pupils, among the flowers, and when each had pinned a beautiful rosette to their sleeves, Jeff's Education was produced, and read aloud.

JEFF'S EDUCATION.

"If I could only obtain sufficient work to meet Jeff's school expenses, when he enters, I would certainly be relieved of a great burden," said Mrs. Nettleby, as she tossed a batch of white and blue squares to her eldest daughter, Sadie.

"But, Motherdy, if you'd only let us help bear your burden, it would be so much easier for you," replied Sadie, in a thoughtful way, for she had always been perfectly willing to help share her mother's burdens. Her's was indeed a filial devotion, and she had exhibited unusual industry since early childhood, but, because of delicate health and a slender frame, her ambition for work had been curbed by a doting mother until she felt that she had no place in this great busy world.

"What more can your slender hands do to lighten my burden? Your sympathy and gentle words do wonders, it is true, and your willingness to go beyond your strength is such an inspiration to me, but your sweet hands are not equal to your courage and resolution," responded the mother, tenderly, as her needle clicked constantly against her thimble.

"But my hands could do much, mother," in the most assuring and resolute tones. "Madge and I, now that we've grown to be quite big girls, could do a deal of the cooking, washing dishes, sweeping, and many other little odds and ends. Yes, we could also do some of Jeff's work, such as tending the garden, and getting brush to light up the night. That would give him time to study, you know, and you'd have more time to sew, piece quilts, or anything else by which you could increase our income."

"I think we do enough already," Madge quickly retorted, as her rosy lips curved into a saucy pout.

When her own self-interests, or selfish interests, rather, were at stake, Madge lost no time in rising to the defensive. No "Ego" interests were ever more securely guarded; but, when her tender years are taken into consideration, her self-importance can be readily excused. She was only ten, three years younger than Sadie, and a vivacious, beautiful creature she was, with a glorious physique, and cheeks resembling peach blooms—a unique picture of perfect health she was, but absolutely destitute of will or taste for work of any kind. She delighted in roving the magnificent, grassy meadows of a sunshiny day, counting golden apples in the orchard—a task almost as difficult as counting the stars at night—tearing down hay in the cow's stall, and racing over the lawn with Rover: but, if asked to replace the

hay, or to go across the meadow-brook for Brindle, the pouting of her drooping lips were as conspicuous as was her joy in the freedom of constant play.

"Jeff is the oldest; he's a boy, and the very one to do the work," she presently continued, with a nochalant air. "He's foolish for wanting to study horrid old books all the time, anyway. For my part, I have no use for books; they make me tired. I'm sure Jeff'll wish some day that he hadn't learned them so hard."

Madge had entered the room when Sadie was making her speech about "what we can do," and was standing by the side of Rover, an ugly, but much loved, shaggy-haired spaniel, who followed her from morning until night; and, while replying to Sadie, when giving great emphasis to a word, her chubby little hand pounded on the dog's back with a force that brought a snarl of resentment from him. However, as Madge was the innocent offender, his resentment was soon appeased, and then he would rub his hairy head against her dress quite fondly.

"But you don't know everything, Madge," was Sadie's quick response, a tingue of sharpness discernable in her tones, as she tried to even two blue squares. "You've never read any book long enough to see what was in it. Unless one has book-learning, one doesn't get to be much in these days. I want something to be made of one in our family, anyway, and as Jeff's the only boy, and is

such a stickler for books and learning, I'm willing to aid him all that I possibly can."

"There's where the trouble comes in, dear," said the mother, raising her eyes slowly, while a beautiful admiration shone in them, to the thoughtful girl who had just finished speaking. "There! That is wrong, Sadie; two blue squares make a balk; white goes between them."

Sadie laughed a gay, musical laugh, that thrilled her mother's heart with sunshine and gladness.

"Is that the trouble which comes in Mother?" as she hastily drew the thread out, and reached for a white square.

"No, darling, it was of you and Jeff I was thinking," as a comical smile swept through her usually tender countenance. "Madge seems to disdain the very thought of a book, but your desire for intellectual attainments is almost equal to Jeff's. Sometimes I almost see a chance to keep him in school for a while, but thoughts of your own sweet aspirations rise up in the vision, to mar the brightness of the prospect. How can I allow you to help educate Jeff, when you have such an overwhelming ambition for an education yourself?"

"Please do not let my ambition, or my needs, cause you a moment of trouble, Motherdy," replied Sadie, in her usual endearing way. "You've given me many, very many, useful lessons, which will enable me to become pretty well educated by my own efforts, if I try. You taught me how to

read and write; you taught me punctuation, sentence-making, how to profit by reading, and many other such useful things. Like Jeff, I'm now willing to make my own way, so far as I can, and, with all the good books that friends lend me, I can succeed all right. My greatest ambition, at present, is to see Jeff well educated. I want a brother who is an intelligent gentleman, of the extraordinary type, you know, and who can wield a fine influence wherever he goes."

"I don't see the use of it," growled Madge, impetuously, as, though listening intently, she fastened a checkered calico band around Rover's large, shaggy neck. When the work was completed, she clapped her hands eulogistically at her own ingenuity in making such an exquisite bow; then Rover pranced around the room proudly, as if conscious of quite a tony appearance in his new spotted neck-tie.

The above topic had been discussed, and not a few times, for Sadie and Jeff were both of a most studious nature, devouring every procurable book for self-advancement, and both were yearning deeply for school advantages.

The conversation was interrupted by Jeff, who came trudging up the gravel path, so eager to impart the "good news," that he could not wait to reach the house: "Oh. Motherdy, I've something good to tell you," he cried excitedly. He rushed in, hurriedly, hat in hand, and merrily whistled

a familiar salute to Rover, who cordially welcomed him by licking his hand.

"I'm always ready to hear something good, Jeff," said his mother, laying her work aside, after which her entire attention became riveted exclusively upon Jeff.

With perceptible enthusiasm, he began to break the good news: "You know Mr. Kelly, the book man, who came to ——town to represent a Book Company in New York."

"I have simply heard him spoken of."

"I know him," said Sadie, with emphasis.

"I know 'im, too," cried Madge, enthusiastically. "He rides past here every day on a beautiful black horse."

Mrs. Nettleby cast a questioning look at Jeff, and then he proceeded: "Well, he made a proposition to me that seems to be a fair one. I went to his office to-day, to look at his books, of course, and I'll tell you that he has them in 'sprisen vriety,' as Uncle Jake would say, of every color, size and taste—best taste that's going of course—and all of them neat and clean as a pin just out of the band-box."

His excitement was so intense, and he talked so rapidly, that he was compelled to transpose a moment for a full breath. He stood facing the others, his arms folded across the back of a chair, while his face wore a look of glad expectancy, as though doubly sure of the much coveted prize, which was yet a secret. Rover stood near him, his

ears tilted back, and was looking up in his face with a queer, deep concern, as though he, too, felt that something new was up, and was silently waiting an explanation of it.

"And you promised to purchase some of the books?" inquired his mother, eager to have the matter explained, and done with.

"Better than that," was the quick response, after which he whistled a humorous tune, timing it by an incessant thumping of his chair with his fingers; "he sends out agents to sell his books, and seems to be exceedingly proud of the fact that he can help poor boys that way. No less than fifty have already educated themselves by selling his books."

"You mean they made the money that way," Sadie interrupted.

"You goosy, you; of course, I meant that! and Mr. Brown, who has that lovely farm just beyond town—you know him?"

"I've seen him a few times."

"He drives by here often, with his wife and beautiful daughter in the carriage with him. He seems so nice and polite, and always speaks to Madge and I so kindly," said Sadie, meekly, in her characteristic way of pointing out the good she saw in every one.

"He's the one. He's certainly the man, for Mr. Brown is good and polite to everybody. Well, he was in Mr. Kelly's office to-day when I entered," Jeff explained, his eyes sparkling like two

twinkling stars of a dark night; "and he told Mr. Kelly that I'd make a bouncing good agent, if I applied myself to that work as I did to everything else. Then they went to a secluded corner, behind a counter, and engaged in an interesting conversation for a while. When they returned Mr. Kelly said that he'd give me half I could make on a lot of small books, which he showed me, and, Mother, their very beauty ought to sell them with little effort on the part of the agent. A mere glympse at the books is enough to make one want them."

"But, when it comes to books, the exterior counts for little, Jeff. One wants the contents, the reading matter, in a book," informed his mother, and Jeff, like Sadie, was always ready to acknowledge her superior wisdom.

"I understand, Motherdy; but when the contents are supplemented by a polished exterior, it does make a speck of difference, you see. You may be sure that the contents of Mr. Kelly's books are unobjectionable; everybody says so. Why, in selling those books, I'd consider myself bringing about the reformation, in places I mean, that Walter Map's works brought about in English literature, in 17—They're dandies, the books are. There is some territory in Warren County, about forty miles from here, that's not yet been canvassed with these books, and Mr. Kelly wants to put an energetic, wide-awake agent there. He's offered the job to me, and insures me to make

enough in three months, if I'm prudent and diligent in the work, to pay the expenses of one term at school."

While giving this bit of information, Jeff scanned his mother's face quite critically, and, when he saw a mysterious cloud settle over her brow, his voice grew exceedingly tremulous, while much of the joyous expectancy receded from his face. He was sensitive, extremely so, and that look of perplexity and disapproval on his mother's face, filled him with turbulent feelings of confusion and shattered hopes. He quitted his standing posture, sank into a lok chair, and looked confusedly and half-tantalizingly, at the calico squares in the basket.

Mrs. Nettleby realized, fully, his consciousness of her disapproval, and her tones were intensely pathetic as she imparted her views of his cherished plans: "But you've never worked away from home, son, that distance I mean. You've had no experience whatever, in that kind of work, and know absolutely nothing of the disappointments, the hardships, and sore trials, that one invariably encounters in such work."

There was nothing but denial and discouragement in her tones, and Jeff felt it deeply, too deeply to make an immediate reply. His mother had always been ready to sacrifice, to strain every possible point, in order to gratify his manly ambition for an education, but this unexpected opportunity did not strike her as a very favorable one,

one calculated to bring about satisfying results. The mere novelty of the work might serve as inspiration for awhile, but, when that wore off, the disappointments and failures would far outweigh all the pecuniary gains, and the reverses would probably mar his taste for books; such things had happened. In addition to these things, the very thought of her fourteen-year-old boy leaving home, and beyond her constant care, was almost unbearable. He was the only boy, had been a pet in the home, ever treasured as a sweet bud of promise, sure, so his devoted mother thought, to bloom into manhood's most exquisite beauty, and be a blessing to her old age. Kept within the sacred precincts of home, with its molding and restraining influences, was, in her judgment, one of the most essential elements in a boy's education.

After Mrs. Nettleby's discouraging remarks, they were quiet for a whlie, the four, scanning each other's faces with thoughtful looks, while the children were wondering what the final outcome would be, anyway; but Madge was bent on settling that unhappy problem herself, so she said: "You ought to know that you can't go, Jeff. You're the only man in the house, and us women can't do all the work."

"Mother isn't a baby, and she's not afraid to work at home while I work abroad; neither is Sadie," he quickly responded, more sharply than was his custom in meeting rebukes. Fidgeting

uneasily in his chair, he looked appealing at his mother, and continued: "I never will have any experience, Mother, until I go out after it. A boy never knows what he can do until he tries. I've learned by observation and reading, that none have been of much use in this busy world except those who were willing to endure hardships; they're the ones who made their own way, and left foot-prints for others. Think of such men as Franklin, Garfield, Lincoln, Grant, and scores of others, all started as poor boys, and by vim and perseverance made their way to the top. I'm not afraid of hardships, if I can make a little money to better myself."

"There's something in the boy's phylosophy," said Mrs. Nettleby, inaudibly, then she fell to thinking of the boy's wonderful courage, fully manifested in every emergency, of his admirable skill in perfecting everything he set his hands to do—always so thoroughly willing to help himself.

Jeff observed his mother's thoughtful mood, and the expression of her face, somewhat relenting, so he thought, gave him courage to say: "You've often prayed, Motherdy, for a way to be opened up for my education. Who knows but this has come in answer to those prayers." A twinkle of fun was now visible in his eyes, for he was quite sure that, in his effort to interpret the mysterious workings of Providence in answering the prayers of those who look above for help, he had offered an argument that appealed to his mother

as no other would. He now thought, by the expression of her face, that she was working a problem.

With a glance in which pity and reproach seemed mingled, and a voice indescribably strange because of its indecisiveness, she said: "We will take a night's rest on it, Son; dream about it, peradventure; then I'll give you my final decision in the morning. In the meantime I want you to consider the mater well; think of being away from home among strangers at night, of the rough, cheerless road to be traveled through the day, and of the unseen failures that you are sure to meet."

"Amen, and amen!" said Jeff, wild with joy. To him, this ray of hope was equal to a full consent, and for a few minutes he was speechless with joy and gratitude. He caressed his mother's cheeks lovingly, promising to faithfully follow her instructions; then he lifted Rover by the paws, and hugged him until he retaliated with a fierce growl. Next, if Mother consented to his plans, he would certainly give her a new dress, Sadie a lot of new books, and Madge a doll and other trinkets.

Jeff did make a mighty effort that night to heed his mother's admonition, to ponder the matter, though he failed to do it well, for his bright, jolly nature gave but little thought to the dark side she had pictured. Only a passing thought was given to the obstacles she had mentioned, for it was utterly impossible for him to believe, with

his optimistic nature, that anything serious would arise in his pathway. The delightful side of the venture, money-making, forming new acquaintances, and seeing the novelties and beauties of the world, cast every other consideration into the back-ground. Each time he awakened during the night, he looked out at the twinkling stars, and compared their brilliant effulgence to the brightness of his future, to his working career in Warren county. To his vivid imagination, the picture was entrancing, and then he went off to sleep amid roving, enthusing visions.

How different with the mother; she had almost a sleepless night, wrestling with the difficult problem, and trying to inaugurate other plans for Jeff. What mind-pictures she did draw up! In the first picture she saw him entangled in a series of difficulties, and far away from home influences. The thought was a painful one, for she knew that, did she consent to his going, she would be digging a ditch for him, a ditch worse than that in Bunyan's Valley of Humiliation, and she alone would be responsible for his condition. Then the problem presented itself in another shape, greatly modifying the dark mind-pictures she had drawn. It was indeed true, as Jeff had said, that some of the most useful men had struggled and toiled, and that without a particle of help, in early life for place and independence. Others, beside those mentioned by him, came to her mind, men who were thrown upon their own resources in

early childhood, and who, through persistent toil and perseverance, vanquished every foe, and became a model for all who strive for a successful life. She knew that dire necessity often caused boys to work wonders, where they happened to be endowed with the right sort of ambition, and possessed the requisite qualities for carving out a way for themselves. She was proud of her boy's most estimable virtues—honesty, industry, generosity, every worthy quality, so she thought, calculated to make a perfect gentleman of him.

Last, a picture of the lovely Joseph, enduring innumerable trials and hardships in the land of Egypt, and yet building up a beautiful character among strangers. "God's plans are mysterious and beyond the grasp of finite minds. He's often leading when we think things are going to destruction," she said to herself, with a sigh of relief. With this conclusion, her restlessness ceased, and she had two hours' sweet and restful sleep before sunrise.

At the breakfast-table the next morning, in low, tremulous tones, Mrs. Nettleby informed Jeff that she had decided to let him try his fortune abroad, for a time at least; then she added that the yielding to his plans had cost her a mighty struggle, and that nothing but a supreme desire to see him well-educated had induced her to make such a decision.

"You're the bestest mother in all this wide, wide world," said Jeff, springing from his chair

most like a gumolastic ball, so quick was the spring, then he threw his arms around his mother's neck in a way that expressed the wildness of his delight. Heedless of the fact that his breakfast was unfinished, he began immediate preparations for his journey. His equipment was small, only a change of clothes and some books in a sachel, but that was enough for him to wag on the way.

When ready to start, his mother gave him a small Bible, with the following practical advice: "Be careful, my son, to keep this and read it; then practice what you read. Shun bad company, for such will bring you into disgrace. You will be tempted to do wrong, but yield not, for the wrong is in the yielding. Remember that your mother is praying for you, but above all, in sunshine or in storm, don't forget Him who holds all things in the hollow of his hands. He can chain the mouth of the lion, and calm the wildest raging of the sea."

Jeff kissed his mother and sisters goodbye, with such happy thoughts of the new life before him that the separation lost much of its sting. He was soon on the highway, as happy, apparently, as a mocking bird in the first fresh days of spring.

Mr. Nettleby had been dead five years, and the ambitious mother had struggled most manfully to support the three fatherless children. They were left with a house and garden, but with no income except that which came by hard labor, and so she

turned seamstress to support herself and children. Their education was the next problem to be solved, but the opportunity for this was meagre indeed. Mrs. Nettleby's nature was deep, artistic, imbued with a wonderful love for the beautiful in life, but the constant demands from loved ones prevented the intellectual culture to which she aspired; so she wished to see her disappointed hopes fulfilled in her children, and to that end she worked. Often her hopes were bright and buoyant, and the joy she found in them was exalted; but equally great were the reverses that sometimes overshadowed her, and marred the brightness of her hopes.

SECOND CHAPTER.

On the Road.

The territory assigned to Jeff was fully forty miles from his home, but he was granted the privilege of canvassing on the road, if he cared to do so; consequently, he took advantage of every opportunity to dispose of a book. Occasionally his success surpassed his highest anticipations. Sometimes a sale was made in every home he entered until there were six books less to wag on the way; again, after a tedious and faithful explanation of the rich merits of the books, of the wonderful mine of the beautiful and useful knowledge they contained, he would be taunted and coldly repulsed in half a dozen homes consecutively. It was exceedingly difficult for him to keep up courage in such circumstances as the latter; he did often look blue and depressed until marked success began to smile upon him again.

From the beginning, his work was constant failures following directly on the heels of some gratifying success; but his labor, even in these most trying times, was not lost, for many good

and useful lessons grew out of those failures. He was daily acquiring a deeper knowledge of human nature, for he was reading people as he had read books since childhood, thoughtfully and carefully, and he saw as great a variety in the faces he met as in the characters which, for the most part, were the mere products of men's imaginations. The unsympathetic countenances, pinched features uncharitable manners of some of the men and women he met, were, in his acute judgment, unmistakable evidences of a destitution of the culture which grows and expands by feeding the mind on good books, and lending a helping hand to one's fellowmen. His mother had taught him this lesson from early childhood. This class, or a majority of those composing this class, looked at him reproachfully when he exhibited his books, and taunted him with such heartless rebukes as: "You're engaged in a mighty poor business. Folks can't live on books," and, "You'd better be at home plowing, if you have any of that work to do."

There was another class, differently cultured, who, some because it was their nature to do so, others from sheer pity for the unfortunate, were exceedingly thoughtful and cordial in their attitude toward him, offering many words of encouragement and sympathy, which. in this work, often meant fully as much as the sale of a book. He had discovered, already, that the knowledge he was acquiring in the work would be as useful to

him as the financial gain; so, realizing that he had many people with as many different views to contend with, he made every interview an object lesson, and stored away every useful item that he could possibly glean from it.

Sometimes he was confronted by such excuses as the following: "I've got to cultivate my land, and have no time for readin'. My children has to work, too, and I'm glad o nit. Workin's better important than foolin' off time wi' books," and another would say: "I'se no larnin' myself, but oo'd like to have good books, if I's able to git 'em; but I'm not able. I has ter tug day and night, nearly, to keep mi family in meat and bread." With this latter class Jeff invariably sympathized, for he had learned in that most trying of all schools, experience, that it was hard to crave the best and most useful things of life, and yet be compelled to do without them. He manifested deep sympathy for this class, and offered them every encouragement of which he was capable, for, being in daily touch with them, he was fast acquiring a spirit of deep compassion for destitute humanity, which served him so admirably in later years.

What a contrast gleaned from the last mentioned, and the following: "I've but little time to read and that's given to the perusal of my daily papers. I've got to keep up with the news of the day, even if the sun must stand still, as it did for Joshua; that's a fact."

Jeff looked at the stranger scrutinizingly, then said, energetically: "That is really of some importance; to know what is going on in the world is quite an accomplishment, but, in addition to that, every one needs some real solid food for the mind. A man needs something to make him see himself as he really is, to make him think, to inspire him with lofty and noble ideas, and then to invest him with power to assimilate his life to them."

The stranger winced, and there was quite a satiricle look in his keen eyes as he retorted: "I think I know my own business. I've no fantastical notions about me, and don't want them. None but the common sense people, those with the tact to look at life from a practical standpoint, and to accomplish things in a practical way, are ever of much value to themselves or to the human race."

As he thought of the peculiar way that some people have of wringing all the sweetness out of life, Jeff shuddered; but he made no further argument. He knew full well that it would be the utmost folly to try to convince a man of that type of his error. He believed that he understood himself, thoroughly, that he knew what he was doing. No opportunity to read at night, or under the shade of a tree, as he trudged from house to house, was ever slighted; so he had acquired a pretty good knowledge of what those precious little books contained.

In spite of his frequent failures, Jeff sold

many books, and was left, one day, with only twelve little volumes. Six of these he had exhibited for inspection at a place where he was looked upon with suspicion, and coldly repulsed. As the distance to the next residence was short, he carried these six books on an arm, instead of satcheling them. His funny reception doubtless had some- to do with it also, for he was in a very great hurry to get away. As he stopped at the next gate, a spiteful-looking, gray, grisly dog, with hideous teeth gnashing as though he intended to devour his victim in one mad dash, came tearing out to the gate like an enraged lion. Only a dilapidated rail-fence separated them, a mere mote for the ferocious creature, and Jeff, fully conscious of the imminent danger of his position, even destitude of so slender a protection as a stick, hastily made way for a tree on the opposite side of the road.

Never was Jeff so frightened; never did he have such a wild race, and it was fortunate that he could run, madly, for the enraged creature was at his heels, and would have thrust his poisonous teeth into his flesh, instantly, had not the six books been scattered pell-mell into the mud. Then the boy had a short respite, which worked for him a happy deliverance, for, while the dog scented the books to determine the extent of their utility to himself, Jeff took immediate advantage of the opportunity to ascend the tree. He had reached a point of absolute safety when an old gentleman, with kindly eyes and a long-flowing, gray beard,

emerged from the house. Seeing Jeff in the tree, and the dog underneath, he understod the situation at once, snatched a stick from beneath the doorstep, and ordered the angry dog into the yard. Grisly was only reluctantly obedient, feigning a down-cast look, as though deeply humiliated; yet he obeyed orders, unhesitatingly, and was soon beyond sight.

Jeff descended the tree immediately, looked at the books with quite a melancholy expression on his face, then proceeded to gather them up. His beautiful treasures were almost submerged in mud, which was very deep and yielding in the center of the road, and a mere glympse at them filled his heart with vexation and regret.

"I'm so glad you thought of the tree, for that dog would have torn you into shreds. His dislike for strangers is so intense that we are compelled to keep him blocked, to prevent his injuring people. I can't imagine how he ever got loose, anyway," said the old gentleman, in tones as kindly as the look in his eyes.

Jeff replied to his various remarks by saying: "He is certainly a bad one," hardly heeding what he was saying, for danger was now in the past-tense, and the vexing mishap occupied but a small space in his mind; his entire attention was riveted on the mud-besmeared books. "They're ruined, and it is such a loss to me," he added, regretfully, as tears, inspite of his strenuous effort to suppress them, rushed copiously to his eyes.

The old gentleman cast a sympathetic look at the boy, and said: "Y-es, they're spiled. I'd not hesitate to pay you for them, if I had the money. As it was my dog that caused the damage, it oo'd be nothing but right for me to pay you."

"Thank you," said Jeff, cheerfully, and in grateful tones; "but I wouldn't let you do that. You were not at all to blame for the capers of the ugly brute." While speaking, he culled some grass from the roadside, and cleaned the books the best he possibly could with it; then he took a bandana from his pocket and dried them; but they were absolutely profitless to him now, for no one would want such badly spoiled books. Yet he put them in the satchel, with clean paper between them and the unsoiled.

Again, as a quiet smile played over his becalmed face, he thanked the stranger most cordially for his would-be kindness, then bade him adieu. For the next two miles it was impossible for him to keep his mind off those injured books. They meant so much reduction in the amount already accumulated for school-tuition, and the thought brought blinding tears to his eyes, but he quickly forced them back. "I will not cry; no, never! I will conquer such feelings, and rise above this little loss," he said to himself, but with a note of despair in his tones. He did conquer them, though, after a manly struggle, and then felt himself in possession of a strong, determinate will to make the best of the circumstance, to make

the loss a stepping-stone on which he could rise to greater success, for he would be more diligent in work than ever before. He would send all the money he had, for the books already sold, to Mr. Kelly, order more, and say nothing about this miserable mishap. Yes, he would do this, and at the very next postoffice he passed.

With a happier heart, over rocks, crags, and through mud, he trudged on and on, silently admitting to himself that his late misfortune could have been so much worse than it really was. He could have been torn to pieces by that ugly, infuriated beast, or so badly wounded that his work would have been retarded for several days. He felt a deep sense of gratitude at having escaped without injury to himself, and just here he thought of what his mother had said about the "Lion's mouth being chained." Then he said aloud: "Some way is always provided for escape from danger in the path of duty."

After having walked about two miles, when ready to make a turn in the road, at the corner of a fence in a delightful shady grove, he was suddenly accosted by a small boy: "Hello, stranger, peddler, tinker!—which way?" demanded the small boy, with bold audacity.

"Hello, baby! Where's your mother's apron-strings? What you been cryin' for?" yelled a chorus of voices, as four other boys larger than the first, quickly emerged from the woodland path.

Some boys would have resented such contemptuous accusations with sneers or blows, but Jeff did nothing of the kind; he was one of the few boys who, by the aid of a pious mother, had discovered a better way to meet such cruel incivilities, and his manly behaviour on this occasion soon won their good-will. It did more than that; it won the highest admiration of which such mischief-making boys are capable.

"Hello, Pod! Ho, boys! Let's make up with him, and take 'im with us a swimming in the pond," cried the boy who seemed to be spokesman, after having been won by Jeff's genteel deportment.

His orders were readily obeyed, and they were soon showering such earnest solicitations upon poor Jeff that it was absolutely impossible for him to say, "No;" however, he did not reply immediately, and, piqued by his long silence, the boys laughed jeeringly, and spun out some ugly oaths because he hesitated.

Instead of resuming his journey without further argument, as he should have done, Jeff foolishly allowed himself to linger, listening to their fallacious and earnest appeals. They gave such a glowing description of the warmth and clearness of the water, of the untold fun and jollity of swimming, of the new life and vigor that a good swim always gave a fellow, preparing him for more and better work, that he finally yielded to their many entreaties, though somewhat reluctantly. It was

so hard to banish the thought of wrong in utilizing his time that way, in sacrificing the good he might accomplish by faithful work in the next two hours, and, too, when it was so necessary for him to work, just after his recent loss. As these thoughts entered his mind, he gripped his satchel more firmly, while a resolute look was depicted in his countenance. His recent decision to be more diligent in work than ever, came afresh to his mind, and caused him to silently consider; then his mother's last charge: "Yield not to temptation," appealed to him most forcibly; so he informed the boys that he would have to revoke his decision to accompany them, that he could not possibly spare the time, that it would be wrong for him to use his time that way, and so on, and on. "I'd enjoy the fun, but you know that duty should come before fun," he said, in a courteous way.

"Philosopher! When did you learn to moralize?" asked one of the boys, tantalizingly.

"Would fun have been invented if it weren't meant for folks to enjoy? God made fun as well as other things, and his Book says, 'If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them," laughed another boy.

"And the Lord Jesus says, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' Doing these things is the outward evidence of a love for their author."

"Pretty set to quote scripture as proof of what

they do," Jeff thought to himself, then said aloud: "None except those who really want to know the truth, who search for truth for truth's sake, in order that they may abide and live by the truth, should ever quote God's word in defense of what they do."

Because of a lack of understanding of them, they treated Jeff's words lightly. They were determined that he should go, and used every possible argument to that end. A deaf ear was given to his "wish to shirk," his intention to "break his promise." They would not let him play "hooky" in any such a way, but became more urgent than ever, persistently assuring him that they were right and he wrong.

Poor Jeff! Never did he have so little moral courage, not enough for resistance in this sore temptation. "What shall I do with my satchel?" he asked, almost in despair.

"Carry it to the pond with you," one boy croaked loudly.

"It oo'd be heavy to pull up the hill, coming back," said another, more tactful than the first.

"Hang it up a tree," demanded a third.

"No, it might be seen there. Hide it over the fence," said the fourth, prudently.

In compliance with this last advice, Jeff lifted his satchel over the fence, among some briars and huckleberry bushes; then off to the pond they all started. He had a lighter heart now, and said to himself that this diversity had come in the very

niche of time—just when he was in sore need of some sort of happy recreation, or jolly companionship; it would help to wear the sharp edge from the disappointment caused by his recent loss, and the very thought brought a jubilee to his heart.

As the pond was at the foot of the hill, just a short distance from where they had the word-battle with Jeff, but little time was lost in getting there. Jeff plunged into the fun with a light heart, for he had yielded himself so fully to the enjoyment of the occasion, that all else was forgotten. Indeed, they must all have had a most enjoyable time, for the little while they had anticipated staying was lengthened to three long hours; but this extension of time caused but little annoyance, so they whistled gayly, and chatted quite familiarly, as they slowly climbed the hill.

But imagine Jeff's disappointment and chagrin, and utter despair, when, after a faithful and tedious search, the satchel had not been found. All through the briars and huckleberry bushes they searched, but to no avail. No evidence of robbery could be discovered, not even foot-prints unlike their own—nothing except the satchel was gone. The look on Jeff's face, as they relinquished the search, was piteous to behold, for the sting of his heart was bitter, caused by a deep woeful sense of his irreparable loss. He sat on the ground, and made no effort whatever to resist the flood of tears that streamed from his eyes. His only staff, his one essential for the

continuance of the work, was now gone, and his mind fluttered with thoughts of what he should do. Should he relinquish the quest entirely, and return home empty-handed, and hopeless?

His companions laughed derisively, and jeered mockingly at his great concern about the matter. "What is the loss of a few worthless books?" they asked, and then chided him, sneeringly, for being engaged in such a "backwoods work." "Why, I'd be ashamed to enter anybody's house with a pack of books under my arms," one of the boys declared, in a scoffing way.

"Good books are a credit to any home," said Jeff, sharply; then he added: "You are all probably just floating over the surface of life, with no special object in view, but I have one—an ideal which I'm striving to reach."

"Ideal!" echoed one, and then they all laughed, tantalizingly. "Of course, we have an ideal, too, but it's to get all the fun out of life we can—this every well-balanced mind has in view. May the fates deliver us from the people who are climbing up to the stairs. They're not fit for anything."

Jeff cared but little, however, for their heartless tirades and sneers, for he was so heart-broken and perturbed in mind, over the loss of his books, that smaller matters affected him but little just now. He started off, empty-handed and distressed, to find some secluded spot where he could think unmolested, and, if possible, decide on the

proper course to pursue; thus he rid himself entirely of his rude and unsympathetic companions. As he trudged along, his thoughts were busy, and finally reverted to that wonderful allegory, where the burden fell off Christian's back, and the poor fellow felt greatly relieved; but the load that he himself had lost only added to the burden of his heart.

He pulled through the mud, which clogged heavily to his boots, a mile perhaps, in a deep, meditative mood, and spying a clean, white rock on the side of the road, he threw himself on it, lengthwise, where he indulged in a long and pathetic soliloquy. First, he wished that he was at home with Sadie and Madge, that he could feast upon his mother's loving voice this very hour, and get some appetizing pie from the home-pantry; but, realizing the impossibility of such a gratification, he soon dismissed that thought. The next thing that engaged his mind was, "Shall I go on, go home, and make no further effort?" A few moments' reflection revealed to him the cowardice of such a step, the utter lack of stamina to do a thing properly, in fact, retreat would indicate a woeful lack of faith, without which nothing could ever be accomplished. If he permitted trifles to blast his faith now, to trail his hopes in the dust, the prize that he started out to win would never be reached; never again could he hope to accomplish anything worth doing; so, taking heart again, he bade adieu to doubts and un-

certainties, and pursued his journey with a settled determination in his heart. Right soon he reached a postoffice. sent Mr. Kelly all the money he had, and advised him where to send some books as soon as possible.

He was now ten miles from his appointed territory, and, as no work could be done on the road, he decided to get there as quickly as possible. But night was rapidly approaching, the sombre curtains of dusk already obscuring far-off visions, assuring him that he must find lodgment somewhere; beside, he was weary from the day's labor, or, more so perhaps, from his sad mistake, and was in sore need of rest and refreshment.

It was a beautiful sunset that had lingered, in golden glory, over all the fair face of nature that delightful eve, and it had filled Jeff's heart with such admiration and appreciation of the golden beauties of his environments, that the past was forgotten, while the glorious present had full sway over him; it gave him a more vivid and soul-stirring glympse of the beautiful world than he had ever experienced before. One thing that added to the impressiveness of the scene, was a voice in the distance, singing melodiously:

GREAT SHEPHERD.

Great Shepherd, oh holy Shepherd!
Leader of thy ransomed sheep,
In thee we trust, oh Lamb of God,
And thy gracious help we seek.

Blessed Shepherd, tender and true,
  Keep us safe within thy fold,
That daily strength we may renew,
  And thy kindness ere behold.

Many of thy purchased sheep,
  Look not to thee for daily bread.
But in the world they sow and reap,
  And are living as the dead.

Thy joys to these again unfold,
  Oh great Shepherd, true and kind,
And bring the lost within thy fold,
  Loosing from the chains that bind.

Jeff paused to listen, and got the words distinctly. Brushing a tear from his eyes, he started on his journey. The day settled into dusk quite rapidly, and he was wandering where he could spend the night, when an unpretentious farm-house, a short distance before him, came plainly to his view. As he drew near, a stoop-shouldered, kind-faced, farmer-looking man came out to the front gate for wood. In his characteristic way with every one that passed—this is customary with farmers, for the most part, kind-hearted true, and generous—he calmly greeted Jeff with some pleasant remark; then, after an interchange of words, from which some inkling of the boy's vocation was gleaned, he promptly extended a cordial invitation for him to enter, and abide until the morning. The invitation was gratefully accepted, with many thanks.

"I don't boast of extra things, but what I have is free to all worthy people. By helping pilgrims on their way, we help one another. I always think

of Abraham entertaining the angels," said the deep-voiced farmer, as he led the way into the house.

"Caught that idea myself," said Jeff thoughtfully, "and this tramp is the beginning of my preparation to help others. I decided that an education would enable me to do so much more, and that is why I'm into this work—to obtain money to educate myself."

"Every one to his way of thinking. I have no education myself except what the Lord gave me, with my little help. But I find that Peter, James and John, and the other disciples, were uneducated, though Judas ought to have been educated, if he could have been made better and stronger by it. Well, just make yourself at home, my friend, knock about where you please, and do what you please. I haven't fed all my stock, and the pigs, yet," said Mr. Jenkins, for that was his name, in the deep tones that had touched Jeff at the gate.

Jeff thanked him in a thoughtful way, and at once felt perfectly at ease. The farmer's many deeds of little kindnesses, his pleasant manners and genial conversation, won Jeff's heart before he had been there an hour. Those things were, in his acute judgment, unmistakable evidences of a good and noble-hearted Christian gentleman. He was a deacon in his church, and his religion was felt in all the practical affairs of his life. During family worship that night, his prayer was

to the point, beseeching and tender, so Jeff thought, and, when the divine blessing was invoked upon him in an earnest and pathetic manner, his tender heart was sensibly touched. The beautiful, touching prayer caused his memory to revert to his mother's last works: "Remember that I am praying for you," and caused unbidden tears to sparkle on his cheeks.

At bed-time Jeff was given a candle, a home-made, tallow candle, to light the way to his room. The candle was a novelty to him, and, after a careful and critical examination of it, he pinched off a tiny speck to see of what it was made. "Compressed grease," he soliloquized, readily admitting its superiority over the brush-lights by which he had always studied at night. It was a charm, a perfect beauty, and he intended to make his knowledge of it profitable at some future time. In order to test the real efficacy of the lovely light, he looked around for something to read, but failing to find anything, he thought of the little Bible in his pocket for the first time since leaving home. It was a mere casualty that it had not been lost with the other books. The satchel was securely fastened when his mother gave him the Bible, and he was in such haste to start on his impromptu journey, that it was slipped into his coat pocket; that alone accounted for its preservation. So he opened the little book, and tested the light of this wonderful candle by the miniature print. After

the experiment the light was pronounced faultless.

He had opened at the 19th Psalm, and read that beautiful declaration, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor line where their voice is not heard." Closing the book, his eyes again rested on the radiant light of the candle, as he repeated to himself, thoughtfully, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."

Leaning his head over on the chair, he recalled his splendid vision of that glorious sunset, and then his mind ran into new channels altogether. He had always depended on his mother for Scriptural interpretations, but now he tried to peep into the hidden mines of their magnificent treasures for himself. Since leaving home he had seen beautiful things in the natural world. In his lonely walks they had appealed to him as never before, because he had studied them in a different light. It seemed that he had geen getting real heart-glympses of them—of the magnificent beauties of God's creation: the universe of worlds, the radiant canopy of blue sky above, the myriads of sparkling stars that dazzle human eyes; and then his mind wondered where his eyes could not penetrate, over the lovely earth with its grand elevation of mountain-ranges, its wonderful depths of waters and beautiful flowing streams,

its flowers of exquisite colors and shapes and fragrance—every admirable design in creation, all God's handiwork, and their language overtowers the language of human voices, their infinite beauty far outreaching the grasp of any human conception, so Jeff thought. With these thoughts he went to the window, and silently contemplated those sparkling gems in the azure heights above, the glimmering moonlight over hilltops and grassy meadows. "Night unto night" —how beautiful the knowledge, and how sweet the voice of that knowledge, to one alone and fully enrapt in its silent glory.

The next morning Jeff was out, and on his way, betimes, for farmers usually retire early, and then they are up at the first appearance of day, or sooner. His early walk was rapid, unobstructed, and perfectly easy, for he had been greatly strengthened, as well as made more hopeful, by the night's uninterrupted rest, with plenty and most wholesome refreshments. On reaching the station, where the books had been ordered to be sent, he felt not the least fatigued. There had been so much to amuse and cheer him on the way; the thickly foliaged hills, crowned with a circle of blue; the fresh grass on the roadside, yet sparkling with the morning dew; the countless number of cattle and sheep grazing over emerald fields, or leisurely resting under the trees; the constant and cheering carols of birds just over his head,

occupied his mind, and helped to relieve the commonplaceness of the journey.

He had but a short time to await the arrival of his books, for they had been shipped immediately upon the reception of his notice. As soon as they came he made arrangements with a merchant to keep them, after a careful selection of such as he wanted to carry with him; these he was wrapping in a paper, preparatory to starting on his journey, when an old gentleman, apparently a most kind and thoughtful one, assured him that a satchel would be much better and more convenient than his method of carrying books; so, judging the boy's needs by his appearance, he offered him one gratuitously. The gift was gratefully received, and with many thanks; then, with a proud and happy heart, as though the past was dead and forgotten long ago, Jeff took up his work again.

As those among whom he now worked were cultured and book-loving folk, his success for a few days was far beyond anything he had expected to accomplish. Besides the unexpected and rapid sales of his books, something else added to the joy and gratitude of his heart: he was among people who were more elegant in their manners, more obliging, especially pleasing in their attitude toward himself, than any with whom he had yet been thrown in contact. As he meant to acquire knowledge as well as to make money, he observed closely, allowing no elegant

act or profitable word to pass unnoticed, but folded them away in his mind for future use. It was really equal to going to school, having his mind broadened, and his manners polished, a little here and a little there, every day, also his appreciation and sympathies daily drawn out by such kindnesses, until, even now, he felt that he had a much broader education than when he left home. He would have so much more to begin with when he did enter school, so he thought.

In a few days he had enough money in his pocket to count for something, and, though exceedingly careful to keep it well-concealed, he delighted much in hearing it jingle. This prosperity made him more zealous of success than ever, so, with renewed energy and quickened enthusiasm, he worked with untiring zeal from sunrise until dark every day; but finally, and to his utter disappointment, he entered a community where it was almost impossible to sell a single book. Some of the people lived in country mansions, dressed most elegantly, owned grand equipages, and seemed to fare sumptuously every day, but they simply cared nothing at all for books to read. Jewels and trinkets, puffs and flounces, in fact every conceivable outward polish and show, was far more important, in their estimations, than the possession of good books. This reverse of circumstances was most trying to Jeff, and harder to endure because his previous successes had been so flattering.

Feeling remarkably blue one day as he tramped a winding, woodland-path, he thought it was tiresome-long; and when he did reach the opening, an old forsaken-looking, broomsage field, he saw heavy clouds, threatening immediate rain and storm, rolling up rapidly from the western horizon. Soon muttering peals of thunder, glaring streaks of lightning, with wild, piercing winds, were unmistakable indications of the fast approaching storm. It had all come up so suddenly, and no human habitation was in sight; what would he do? The rain began to fall in torrents, the wind blew furiously, and Jeff hurriedly sought shelter beneath a huge beech tree, only a short distance to his right. That would afford some relief, but the rain was so hard and so incessant, that it was utterly impossible for him to keep dry; still, he cared but little for his own condition, his entire attention, from the start, had been given to his books, which were in a cloth satchel, capable of absorbing water. Hastily drawing off his coat, as he entered the shelter, he threw it over the satchel, after the best and driest place under the tree had been found for it.

Standing in a thoughtful mood for a while, feeling a dreadful chilliness without his coat, and awed by the loud, muttering gales over and around him, he witnessed the distruction of a tall tree by lightning, only a short distance from where he was; then he was seized with an awful fear that the same disaster would befall the tree

under which he stood. The glaring flashes of lightning blinded his eyes, the awful thunderbolts made him tremble, and the mighty blasts of wind shook the tree over him to and fro until his excitement was beyond all description. Many minutes did he battle with his terrible fear, for he saw nothing but final destruction where he was, and leaving the tree meant iminent peril, for the rain continued to fall in torrents. "What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do?" he almost shrieked at the top of his voice.

In some unaccountable way, his memory reverted to the pleasant night spent in the farmer's home, and that memorable meditation up stairs came to his mind. He believed, oh, so fully then, that God made the world, that he still rules all things; his mother had taught him this, and she had said: "God holds all things in the hollow of his hands," and he had given absolute credence to her statement. Then the thunder, the lightning, the earthquakes—everything must be subject to His ordering, he said to himself. The storm at sea was calmed by the word of Christ, setting the disciples at perfect ease, and could he not be protected by the same omnipotance? Yes, if he could only have unwavering faith in that power. With these thoughts a happy calm pervaded his soul, for a consciousness of divine protection brought instant relief. During the remainder of the storm he was busy thinking of the wonders of the rain, and analyzing its clear

properties. The huge, crystaline drops glistened like great pearls rolling down from heaven, polished with the glory of its atmosphere, and fragrant with the beauty up there; how grandly magnificent they were, in their silvery robes.

Though there was not a dry thread in his clothes, Jeff stood drinking in the freshness and the beauty before him, until the rain had entirely ceased; then he hurried to his books. The satchel had been placed on a projecting, slanting root of the tree, and the water had run off instead of being absorbed by the coat, the material of which was thick and heavy; still, some water had seaped under the satchel, and a few of the books were damp. He knew they must be attended to immediately, and made arrangements to dry them. The clouds had rifted, the sun was shining warmly, so he carried them to a fence, and laid them on the top rails. Then he took off his shoes and stockings, and spread them out to dry.

THIRD CHAPTER.

Going Home.

During the next two months, in spite of frequent failures, obstacles, and trials of various kinds, Jeff sold many books. He was sure that he had made enough money to pay his tuition at school, as well as to equip himself with books, stationery and other necessary requirements of a student's life. When, after a short period of repeated and discouraging failures, unexpected success began to beam upon him at every turn, he wrote the following letter to his mother:

Dearest Motherdy: "I know that, after having been apprised of my recent failures, you will be glad to hear of my marvelous success. My work is just a booming now, and I'm sure to find myself in a good school before long. Won't I be glad then? And I can forever rejoice in the fact that I won it all by my own efforts. I have just sent Mr. Kelly twenty dollars, and, if I sell the other books, I will bring the rest of his money when I come.

My work is pretty good schooling for a boy, especially if he happens to have grit enough to take everything that comes, and say nothing; but the most of the people I meet are kind to me as I want them to be. So many of them really exert themselves to make me feel pleasant and comfortable. I find plenty of good books in most of the homes where my nights are spent, and you may be sure that I feast upon them until bedtime. I'm as great a book-worm as was the Lincoln who read so much by brush-light.

I forgot to tell you, in my last letter, about my fright in a terrible storm, and how it all ended; but I'll be coming home in a few days, when I'll tell you much more than I can write. Trust that you and the sisters are well. Give them my love, and take a large share unto yourself.

Your most affectionate son,

JEFF.

In two more weeks nearly all the books were sold, leaving him with quite a snug little sum of money, all his own, beside ten dollars that belonged to Mr. Kelly. Many times, when alone, did he count this money, ever with an increasing pride for the admirable industry and tact that had brought him such wonderful success. It was the biggest pile of money he ever owned in his life, so much more than he once expected to own for a long while, and it had all been accumulated by his own efforts.

It would be utterly impossible to describe Jeff's bouyancy of spirit, so wild, so excitable it was, with a mixture of enthusiastic worship and joyous expectancy. He felt that he had certainly crossed the line where "ill-luck" obstructs, and that henceforth his career would be a most successful one. What would his old associates say to this? They had never done such wonders in all their lives, and probably never would, so Jeff thought; but what had ministered to his success? The whole world had been beautiful for several days, the weather faultless, and it seemed that everything and everybody had combined to make his work pleasant and profitable. His work was delightful, and the birds were singing as sweetly as ever, but Jeff was so completely absorbed in the work he had accomplished that the rare attractions of his environments ceased to be appreciated as formerly; the humbling tendencies of his past misfortunes were all forgotten, because he was so elated over the silver in his pocket that little space was left for anything else in his mind.

It was indeed a warm day, but full of sweet, melodious breezes from the idylic south, so, beneath a lovely chestnut tree, with wide extending branches, Jeff threw himself on the ground for a quiet rest. The birds in the tree-tops seemed to have caught the spirit of the glorious day, with its musical breezes and golden sunshine, and were carolling songs sweet and harmonious enough to catch the admiration of the most hardened and

disinterested; yet Jeff gave little heed to their winsome notes. Time and again did he count his coin, while he was so completely absorbed in it, that past blessings were remembered no more. Like one in sacred history, nearly two thousand years ago, his motto for the present was: "Soul, take thine ease; drink and be merry."

After a long and refreshing rest, he keeled over on the ground, and was soon fast asleep. To his utter astonishment, when he awakened, the sun was setting. How mysterious! He had been sleeping well at night, indeed his work was an exercise that prepared him for sound and restful sleep at night, and yet, in broad-open daylight, with the sun shining and the birds singing, he had gone to sleep at eleven o'clock in the morning, and slept uninterruptedly until sunsdown. He pulled himself up slowly, feeling very dull and drowsy, as though convalescing after a long illness, rubbed his eyes confusedly, and thought to himself that he certainly must be dreaming. Rising to his feet, he walked languidly to and fro beneath the tree, looking out in every direction. No, it could be no dream, he decided at length, for, with wide-open eyes, he saw the chestnut tree, the distant hilltops, the cattle grazing on a meadow; and he heard, distinctly, the barking of a dog at some neighboring farmhouse.

Several long strides had been made over and around the spot where the sachel was, before he discovered that it was missing; then he was in-

stantly seized with serious apprehensions that prompted him to thrust his hand into his coat pocket. Lo, his pocket book was gone! He was deeply stunned. His heart sank within him, as the frightful, throbbing thought, "Thief! Robber!" rang through his frenized brain. In wild desperation, he threw himself on the ground again, near the great body of the sighing tree, and there, amid dreadful thoughts of spite, revenge and turmoil of conscience, he worked himself into such a state of turbulent vexation that he could find no relief save through a flood of tears. For several moments he battled with the terrible rage that burned at the worst disaster that had yet befallen him; but when the reaction came, when his better judgment gained the ascendency, he saw things in a different light, and acknowledged his error in going to sleep in such an inauspicious place. Why had he done so, after having felt so well and strengthened by his long rest?

It was not until he was quietly seated in a manger, in an old dilapidated and forsaken stable —he had determined to see no human face, and to spend the night in the most secluded spot possible—that he was prepared to view the unhappy affair from other standpoints. His mother had taught him to love money only for its utility, to be humble in prosperity as in adversity. This lesson was invariably illustrated by the Messiah's birth in a manger, and the lovely,lowly life of deepest poverty, in order to teach the human race the sur-

passing importance of the greater riches, the eternal riches of a pure heart, and a life consecrated to God. The lesson was far more impressive now than when given, for he had learned, and from sad experience, how material riches could take wings, so to speak, and fly away as a breath of summer wind; how fleeting the enjoyment of them, and how important to first seek that which prepares one for life, with all its joys and adversities. Again, he thought of the rapid strides he was making toward self-love, how he glorified himself for the accumulation of money. How he was puffed up with self-importance.

In spite of his acknowledgment of the above truths, again he fell to thinking of the terribleness of his loss; it meant so much more than a mere loss of the money, though that was such a treasure, such a comfort, it meant failure all around, a most miserable failure—failure to attend school, of which he had been so certain that morning, failure to meet his mother's glowing expectation of him, and failure to liquidate the debt he owed to Mr. Kelly. These were the darkest features of the loss; minor ones, of course, came in for consideration, such as facing his associates penniless after having boasted of the fortune he expected to make, and his inability to get the presents promised to his mother and sisters. "There's a deep mystery about this affair, but I'll understand it some day, perhaps," he said to himself.

In the midst of these serious cogitations he dropped off to sleep, and knew nothing more that night, until the crowing of chickens and the barking of dogs at farm-houses, awakened, and informed him of the near approach of day. Rising, languidly, and going to the door, he saw a glimmering light above the eastern horizon, and then he knew that the king of day would soon be irradicating the whole earth. Off in the distance he heard the sweet voice of a maid singing:

"He tarries so long, so long,
I fear he will not come."

The beauty and freshness of the new day, however, brought but little consolation to Jeff's disappointed hopes, and sadly bruised heart, for, somehow, he had not retained those beautiful thoughts about the "first things," and, too, when he had said just the night before that he would make the best of circumstances, that the misfortune was not too great for him to rise above, but now saw that he was deeply, indescribably sensitive to the loss.

One other problem yet remained to be solved, to be faced, and immediately decided upon: should he return home empty-handed and in disgrace, or should he order more books, and make an effort to retrieve that which had been lost? But how could he think of remaining longer when his alloted time had expired? He had promised his mother, and must obey; that was more important now

than money-making, or anything else. In a few moments, as he stood in the door and gazed at the rising sun, he had his future path marked out; he would go home, have a little vacation, and then get his mother's consent to his making another venture with books. He made money by selling books one time, and knew that he could do it again; but the next time he would act more prudently, and guard against any possible loss. He felt that, if he gave up the prize now, his entire future life would be one of continued failures—a picture that made him shudder. The old school adage: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," came to his mind, and he determined to practice the precept to it's fullest extent, before giving up. He would go home, confess the whole ugly truth to his mother, and return to this same field after a short rest, but with more books than he brought the first time, for he knew that he could sell more.

At four o'clock that afternoon, he sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, by the roadside, just two miles from his home, not to rest, for he had happened to the good fortune of getting conveyance in a carriage coming in that direction; but he stopped for a few moment's meditation as to the proper way to announce his sad story to his mother. In a little while he had the plan formulated in his mind, after which he gave a sigh of inttense satisfaction.

"Hello, young man! Why, is that you, Jeff?"

said a familiar, cheerful voice, as Mr. Brown walked out from a clump of trees at Jeff's back.

Jeff raised his eyes instantly, moist with tears of gratitude at hearing that familiar voice, an incident that brought him one link nearer home; then he looked up, gently, into the face of a man who had been like a father to him. But when he returned the cordial salutation: "Yes, sir, it's me. And how do you do, Mr. Brown?" his voice was husky, and his words almost indistinct.

"Oh, pre-eminent, so far as health and spirits are concerned," declared the good man, with a robust laugh, and then, as he had been touched by that strange, husky tone in Jeff's voice, he scrutinized the young man most critically. He seemed to look much older than when he left home and his face bore unmistakable marks of some bitter experience. This discovery prompted him to make the inquiry: "And how did you succeed with your work, Jeff?"

"Quite well, thank you; but an ugly misfortune overtook me at the last," he felt duty-bound to say; then he recounted the whole sad affair, reserving nothing, not even his final conclusion to make another effort, after a short rest. In the beginning of this narration he appeared very modest, but, as he advanced, his countenance beamed with the most resolute and captivating expression that Mr. Brown had ever seen on the boy's face. It was a look in which the true worth

of his noble self was revealed, and which made him look as grand and beautiful as Apollo.

Mr. Brown's admiration of the boy increased a hundred fold. He was immensely proud of his pupil—his attitude toward Jeff had ever been as Aquilla toward Apollos— so he said: "I approve of your plan, Jeff, only I think it would be better to start out again free of indebtedness. It's bad to be in debt, you know. I can put you in position to pay that ten dollars right soon, if you will accept the work. I'm just from where my men are working, sawing and riving timbers in the woods; they have an enormous pile of staves to be hauled out as soon as possible. I had just started to find some one to do the work. I offer it to you, and at good wages, if you care to have the work."

Jeff's face brightened up perceptibly.

"I would indeed be glad to get the work. I can hardly endure the thought of being in debt; that is, at present, a greater burden than the loss of my schooling."

"You know I have always told you to come to me when in trouble, Jeff. I don't want to ruin a boy's independence, but after he chooses a work that suits him, I like to be of some benefit to him."

So the contract was settled, immediately after which Jeff was happier than he had been since that unfortunate sleep beneath the tree. It seemed that a great burden had been lifted from his heart. Meeting an old friend, of course, did much to re-

lieve his perturbed mind. The remainder of his journey home was more pleasant.

Madge, who had been rolicking with Rover in the front yard, saw and recognized Jeff as soon as he was within sight, just as he turned a corner in the edge of the woods, and, with Rover prancing at her heels, she ran with all her might to meet the returning prodigal, for that was what he seemed to be now. He had almost designated the time of his return, so that she had been on the lookout for the last two days. It was hard to tell which cut the cutest shines, when they came up to Jeff, the little sister or Rover. She kissed his hands, his face, his neck, crying in the meantime for sheer joy, while Rover licked his hands, pranced and capered, and barked in the most excitable and delighted manner. It was all so sweet to Jeff, so delightful a home-coming, that his heart was thrilled to its utmost depths. Oh, he was so very, very happy!

Madge's excited maneuvers, in the wild, mad run with Rover, were witnessed by Sadie, who, discovering the true cause of her pranks, quickly informed her mother; then they started, also, to meet the returning prodigal, who was almost smothered by the kisses showered so copiously upon him. In his vexation, he had forgotten to consider this phase of his home-coming, and the wonderful surprise and excitement of it came near throwing him off the balance. He was like one speechless and deaf, giving only smiles for

their many demonstrations of gladness and affection.

"I haven't a ring to put on your finger, my darling, nor a fatted calf, but the next thing to it; I have a big, fat hen to kill tomorrow," said the proud mother, in tones chuck full of a happy gratefulness.

"A big, fat hen! Ah, that's the best of all. Never did I get such chicken as I do at home. My mouth is simply watering now for some of your hen, Mother," said the happy boy, in appreciative tones.

During the remainder of their walk Jeff was pounded with innumerable questions, but it was a long while before he was able to command an easy and unobstructed use of his tongue; because his heart was unutterably full of gladness, yet he did, finally, venture a reply to their inquiries. When fully assured that entire satisfaction had been given in that direction, he blurted out, unreservedly and painstakingly, the whole pathetic story of his sad failure, taking especial care to place most of the blame on himself, for carrying so much money in his pocket, and for going to sleep at noonday. So the great trial was over; the whole ridiculous affair, in black and white, was before them, ready for their censure or their sympathy. Most admirable indeed were the consequences of this recital: he met with no rebukes, no jeers, and no "I told you so's;" but, on the contrary, Mrs. Nettleby, mother-like, poured out

so many cute and soul-cheering expressions of sympathy and compassionate love, that Jeff felt fully rewarded, already, for the many hardships he had endured. She also expressed many thanks for Mr. Brown's kindness, and then she assured the boy that some way would open up for his education. "Such faith and fidelity as yours will not go unrewarded. Children, as well as grown-ups, get their merits, if they are true and faithful," she finished, in kindly tones.

Then Sadie, the sweet-souled, self-denying sister that she was, capped it all by saying: "Yes, indeed, Jeff, you shall go to school, and without going into that book business again, too. Since you left home, mother has worked almost incessantly to put me in school this fall. Oh, she made so many distingue-looking dresses, and got *mucho dinero* for them, too; and the result is, she has saved up quite a snug sum for school purposes. But I'm going to let you take my place, Jeff; you shall go to school, and I will wait, which I can well afford to do, as I'm much younger than you are."

"But you shall do nothing of the kind," declared Jeff, vehemently, jumping out of his chair, and making several quick strides across the floor; then, pausing in front of Sadie, he continued: "Never shall a sister of mine deny herself in such a way for me. You shall go to school, according to previous arrangements. I certainly will not take your place. I've too much manhood for that;

besides, if I so cowardly submit to failure now, without a righteous effort to rise above it, my whole life will be a miserable failure, will be utterly worthless. I feel it; I know it. The next time I *will* succeed; see if I don't."

His mother's eyes were bent upon him with that old-time look of holy delight in them, for the glad, sweet thrill at the reception of her first born, after several months' separation, was too momentous a matter to be obliterated very soon. A bright, happy smile had wreathed her face as she listened to his appeal, followed by a beautiful, decided reiteration of his own premeditated plans for his future. Great was her admiration of her son's strong will, and her confidence in his ability to succeed, some day; still she said:

"But, my dear, there's time enough for Sadie; she's so young. As to the failure you've mentioned so often, please don't term it so; it was a grand success. I've been thinking, already, of the many useful lessons you gained by the experience. Your efforts were most admirable and praiseworthy, and the mishaps were mere incidents, or lessons, rather, to teach you caution, resignation, how to rate money and its equivalents at their true value, and how to feel a dependence on God, giving honor for his share in your achievements. You must learn to profit by experience. You know what you said before leaving home, about the sad experiences of those who serve as models for young men today. In spite of misfortunes you did well,

and now deserve to be rewarded for your noble efforts, for which ten months in school would be but a poor return. Then, at the expiration of your first term, you can again test your talent for making and keeping money, and thus pay for your second year's schooling. You ought to be in school now, and should never think of making the money yourself now."

Though Jeff considered his mother capable of the wisest counsel—he was more ready to acknowledge her wisdom since his return home—and worthy to be listened to, he could not see this matter as she saw it, and was on the verge of making another appeal, when the conversation was suddenly interrupted by a handsome carryall, drawn by two large, dappled bays, stopping at the front gate; and, though it had been several years since she saw her last, Mrs. Nettlegy instantly recognized an aunt, her mother's only sister, as a tall, fashionably dressed lady stepped out. As soon as her discovery was imparted to the children, with hearts elated with joy and gladness, and feet of surprising swiftness, they were soon at the gate, with an abundance of happy greetings and welcomes for their relations—Mrs. Mackey, with her stalwart, handsome son, and half-grown daughter. It was most like a fairy tale to the happy children, this unexpected meeting with relatives they had not seen since they were wee toddlers, because they instinctively felt

the ties of kinship so strongly that the visitors did not appear the least like strangers.

"This is our second delightful surprise this afternoon, and I fear it'll turn out to be a dream," said Sadie, in her usual impulsive way.

Mrs. Mackey, with quick, womanly perception, and gentle judgment, eyed the sweet-faced girl *capapie*, for the girl had made a good and lasting impression upon her stately aunt. She fancied the mild blue eyes, the golden hair, with the sweet firm mouth. Her niece's words also filled her mind with querrelous thoughts, and she was on the point of making some inquiry about the other "delightful surprise," when the appearance of Mrs. Nettleby diverted her attention.

"I was just too glad to live today, when Jeff came home," chirped impulsive little Madge, in her usual thoughtless way of describing her feelings, and irrespective of the meaning of words. This outburst came after they were comfortably seated in the plain little parlor, with its great open fire-place, and old-timy, sadly scarred furniture.

"Then I suppose that was the delightful surprise to which Sadie alluded," said Aunt Mackey, promptly availing herself of this first opportunity to satisfy her curiosity about the matter.

"Yes, Jeff took a three months' tour through Warren county—a business tour," with a meaning twinkle in her eyes, "and he has just returned home."

"A business tour!" echoed Mrs. Mackey, with a remarkably quizzical expression, for Mrs. Nettleby's wink had again aroused her curiosity, which was great, when disturbed.

"Yes, a business tour," repeated Mrs. Nettleby, but further explanation was interrupted by some demand from the young folks, and no more was said about the matter until they had assembled around the supper-table, where Jeff gave quite an interesting exposition of his experiences among strangers. The subject was broached by some one hinting at some doubtful point of table-etiquette, when Jeff related a few of his observations while among the polite and well-bred people; from that the subject took wings, so to speak, and flew from one incident to another, until the guests were in possesion of all the interesting things that had happened to Jeff. Some of them he related in the most comical and satirical manner.

"And, would you believe it? he's going back to that horrid place again. Do, dear Aunt, do help mamma and I persuade him to accept our terms, and go to school," urged Sadie, in a pleading way.

"Your aunt is doubtless ignorant of our terms, dear," said the mother. Turning to her guest, she continued: "Sure that Jeff, from his great success in the beginning, would have means of his own, I began to save up in order to put Sadie in school. After his misfortune, Sadie tried to persuade him to take her place; but he seems to think that would be a most unreasonable thing to do."

From the start, Mrs. Nettleby had encouraged Jeff's recital, purposely to enlist her aunt's help in trying to convince him of the justice of the plea urged by Sadie and herself.

Mrs. Mackey understood the situation at once, and, giving that young gentleman quite a reproachful look across the table, she said, advisedly: "Your mother and sister are right, my dear; you did deserve something for the persistent efforts you made in the face of so many disheartening obstacles. They know you did your duty; that you could have done no more, and they also know that you have reached an age when it would be the utmost folly to trifle with time, if you ever obtain an education. To prove to you the justice of their plea, I will announce that arrangements for Sadie's education are already on foot; so it seems that Providence has one end of the line up there, while we hold the other down here."

She paused a moment, so amused was she at the intricate looks of wonder and bewilderment on all their faces, even the face of the innocent Madge; then she went on: "That is part, and a very important part, too, of my visit here just at this time—to take that young lady home with me. Beulah is making speedy preparations to go to college right soon, and my darling baby here affirms that she will die of ennui without a girl-associate in the home; so, for a substitute for the eldest daughter, I have come to beg your mother to lend me Sadie for a while. She and Annie will

attend our home school, which, by the way, is an up-to-date school in every respect."

A wonderful silence followed this announcement. Mrs. Nettleby's face wore a most quizzical expression, difficult to apprehend; Jeff's countenance exhibited a perplexity that seemed to be saying: "I'd just as well submit;" while Sadie's look was as one contemplating a long journey, with a foretaste of heart-hunger for home and loved ones, yet finding a sweet satisfaction in the possession of all those advantages for which she had longed all her life, and Madge, with that old-time pout on her lips, seemed to secretly urge her wonted plea: "I don't see the use of it all," and to this she gave an audible expression, when a chance came for her to put in: "Jeff and Sadie know they can't both leave home. I can't do all the rest of the work, besides mother's, and we can't stay by ourselves, either. Two women can't stay alone; so there!"

Aunt Mackey laughed at the idea, "two women," and there was a queer jingling of knives and forks, mixed with laughter round the table, for the child's wail, added to a most comical expression of the lovely face, had struck them, especially the visitors, as something quite humorous.

"But the fewer the better share, darling," assured the aunt, optimistically. "More new dresses, more cakes, chocolates and candies, then your time for school will come next, after Jeff and Sadie are through. Dear little sweet, I know you are

not old enough to consider future advantages," cooed Aunt Mackey, sympathetically, as she laid an arm around the unresisting neck of her beautiful, rosy-cheeked niece.

"Madge is the most conservative child I have," as a maternal nod went in the direction of the "cutest dear." "She's not much on the change, even where ideas are concerned."

The cousins chuckled quite humorously.

"But when Jeff and Sadie return with their 'co'lege airs,' she'll change her mind. She'll see the beauty of their attainments, and begin to build air castles for herself." This prophesy was by Aunt Mackey, and then, before they left the supper-table, plans for Sadie were fully discussed.

By the next morning every thing was settled in a most amicable manner. Sadie, amid a conglomeration of fears, doubts, and intense happiness, returned with her aunt and cousins; and in a few weeks Jeff was heaping up infinite treasures, great intellectual and moral stamina, in one of the best primary schools of the country. Knowing how he worked with those books, coupled with a knowledge of his insatiable desire for advancement, no one would think of inquiring how he utilized his time in school. It will be sufficient to say that he won the highest honors in all his grades. During vacation he worked, as his mother had suggested, and, in a few years, he was a polished scholar from one of the best colleges.

In middle life he was a strong, true, and useful

man in his community, whose influence and power for good grew as long as he lived. He always maintained that his varied experiences, while canvassing with books, was the best preparation for the rapid advancement of his powers in school, and in all his future career. There he realized for the first time that his work and influence must be for eternity.

THE VISITOR.

"Miss Clai—re!"

"Who—hee!"

"Miss Clai—re! do you hear—me?"

"Yes, I hear—you."

"I want to ask you—some—thing."

"Come nearer, so I can hear you—better," in loud, clarion tones.

"The briars—are so—thick," screamed Cathey, at the top of her voice. Just as the last word went out of her mouth, however, she espied a cute bunny-path on the east side of the thicket of briars, running a serpentile course. It was now easy enough to obey her teacher's request, and she glided nimbly out of the little niche where she had been picking berries, around one great clump of vines, and then another, until she was up with the other berrypickers—the governess, Bertha and Paul.

This was their mode of recreation on this occasion, instead of walking, for, if there was anything this trio of children delighted in more than sauntering over fields, meadows, and the riverside, it was berrying. The great patch they fre-

quented oftenest was a full mile from home; but tney did not care for that distance, the walk was so jolly, and the vines seemed to groan in agony beneath the weight of prodigous, shiny fruit, and their vessels could be filled in a few moments. The distance across this much fruited space was so extensive that it was really necessary for one to speak very loud in order to be heard on the other side. Beside the blackberries, and all the rich foliage, and sweet-scented grass, there were huckleberries, dewberries, gooseberries, and to cap all—the richest forest of trees nearby.

"I was going to ask," said Cathey, puffing furiously, with a full stomach—she had only a few berries in her vase, but her tramp around briars and grass-plots fatigued her enough—"I was going to ask if you have another story as good as Jeff's Education?"

"But Jeff's Education wasn't half as good as the other stories," put in Paul, imperiously. "He had a harder time than any of the children in the other stories, just because he was a boy, I know. They had nothing but fun and frolic all the time At the Picnic; so they did in Angel, most all the time."

"Do you say that life was fun and frolic for Angel?" inquired Miss Claire.

"But her end was right all the samey. She cried like a baby at the start, but laughed at the end," declared Master Paul, with the air of a wonderful literary critic.

Miss Claire smiled effusively, and said: "Angel did succeed in getting her just merits; every one does that, eventually. Jeff did. You see he was going to be the great man, who was to do everything for himself, and his pride got a fall—that was all. The humiliation was a good lesson in the end, teaching him his folly and weakness, and then served as a passport to rapid advancement when he did start up hill. He had a finished education, and a faultless character; what better success could he have acquired?"

"Paul didn't see but one side of the story—Jeff's faults and failures," said Bertha, laughing at the queer look in her brother's eyes. "It's too true, my dear; if one needed a pessimistic literary critic you'd certainly fill the bill."

There was a merry ripple of laughter.

Bertha and Cathey had sought shade beneath the berry vines. Miss Claire's hat brim was so broad that it shaded her head and shoulders uniquely, and Paul screened from the sun's bright rays in the hat's gray shadow. An attractive group they were.

"It's well to see the shady side of life, sometimes, for it helps us to appreciate the bright side more," said Miss Claire, pathetically, moved by the humiliated expression in Paul's eyes.

"Bow! wow! wow!" said Bouncer, a huge Newfoundland, Paul's pet, as a frightened rabbit stealthily crossed his pathway.

Bertha and Cathey were on their feet in an

instant, and Paul, hallowing: "Hee! sick! sick! sick!" started on the trail as fast as his duck-legs could carry him. Away they went, the dog saying, "Bow! wow! wow!" and the boy, "Sick! sick! sick!" until they were lost in the thicket of trees and shrubs at the foot of the hill, when it became impossible to distinguish the boy's voice from the dog's.

They soon returned, however, Paul swinging bunny by the hind legs, and Bouncer acting as policeman. His face wore a broad grin. "I shall have some bunny-meat for supper," in triumphant tones.

"I'd as soon have canine meat," hissed Cathey, with a reproachful look at Paul.

"It'll do to think about meat when supper time comes," was Bertha's decision, for her mind was more occupied with the stories they had been discussing, than with Paul's game. There were some things in the last story that she did not fully comprehend, and now was a convenient time to seek enlightenment, for Bertha was a real student. as the reader has doubtless learned before now. "Miss Claire, who was the Walter Map, of whom Jeff spoke, and what did he do for English literature?"

They were all gathering berries now, except Jeff, from the same rustic vine, and the slightest modulation of a voice could be distinguished; so the conversation, that began in a tenor pitch, was finished up in moderate tones.

"Then, as our vessels are full, let us go to the shade, and I'll tell you while we're resting," said the governess, as she led the way to a spreading maple tree, which cast a dense shade far down the shrubby slope. Rustic chairs, and quaint settees were there, prepared especially for such emergencies, and they had witnessed the conversation of many a merry maid and happy youth.

After some preliminary remarks, Miss Claire said: "It was said that Walter Map worked a wonderful revolution in English literature. Before he began to write, romances, for the most part, breathed of revenge, witchcraft, hatred, murder, unlawful loves, and so on. Map instituted into the Arthor legend the conception of the Holy Grall, the holy vessel used by Christ at the Lord's supper, which Joesph of Arimathea was supposed to have brought into Britain. His beautiful inspiration, written to lift the ideals of the people high, had a wonderful influence over authors, as well as many others; the natural result was, that they strove for something higher, purer, and nobler in literature. Map's Latin history of the Graal is not now extant, but the French have correct translations of it; this, and other works of equal merit by Map, was said to be the great agency in the purification of English literature."

Bertha, leaning on the arm of her willow chair, was deeply reticent a moment, with a berry-stained finger on her mouth, then she roused

up, airily, and said in a thoughtful way: "The English people ought to be exceedingly proud of Map, for, in my judgment, a book filled with lawlessness, murder, and things of that kind, is very distasteful. I think that men who lift people's ideals, showing them higher and worthier aims to work for, ought always to have a place of honor. But now I'm going to ask one more question, Miss Claire, and then I think I've done, while we remain in this glorious berry-kingdom. You said that Jeff felt like Christian did when the burden fell off his back, only Jeff's heart-burden didn't fall; what was the burden that fell off Christian's back?"

Cathey and Paul were tugging at Miss Claire's rings and bracelet, propounding unanswerable questions, and it was some time before she was free to heed Bertha's request; but, after she had succeeded in quieting them, she explained: "Christian was the chief character in Bunyan's famous allegory, 'The Pilgrim's Progress;' and the race he made was symbolical of every true christian's life. The burden that vexed him so—allegorically described as being on his back—until he reached the Wicket-gate, was the clouds, doubts, and fears, that oppressed his mind and heart. The burden fell off at the gate, where faith transformed his life in such a way that he was enabled to rise above things that oppressed him, and to look forward to the crown for which he was striving." She glanced at the three pairs

of eager, impressive eyes, and added: "It is faith that drivesp essimism from our lives, and gives us beautiful optimistic views of life and things."

"Are pessimists ghosts or vermin, Miss Claire?" asked Paul, still fumbling with her bracelet in a loving way; but there was such an earnest, quizzical expression in his dark eyes, that she was forced to laugh outright.

"They're both, darling, and everything else that's gloomy, hurtful, and tormenting. But, literally, what we usually term a pessimist is one who sees only the dark side of things. He's continually climbing mountains before he gets to them, and the worst of it is he tries to pull his neighbors up with him; the shadow that he casts is so dark and gloomy that its chill is felt by every one who comes into his presence."

Here she consulted her watch, and started abruptly. "We're ten minutes late," she said, in low tones.

On their way home, Cathey grasped her arm, and said: "You never did answer my question about that other story."

"No, but I've been wondering if I have such a story as you demand. Never mind, though, I'm going to begin a new story this very night, a Christmas story, entitled 'The Children's Christmas Gifts.' I have the plot in my mind, with all the outline, and can soon produce it."

"Christmas story! oh, my! Won't that be just

too delightful? I've a mind to shout right now. I've been wanting a story of that kind for ever so long. Let me see, let—"

"There! You like to have gone into that pit," said Miss Claire, grasping Cathey's arm more firmly.

"They're always bobbing up just when we're not looking for them," cried Cathey, a little huffy.

"And that is evidence enough that you should always be on the lookout," said Bertha, with some importance; then she asked: "Isn't that so, Miss Claire?"

"Yes, figuratively and literally," was the laughing reply.

"Who's that?"

A tall, stately-looking gentleman had entered the yard, and seemed to be waiting for our merry, berrypickers, as, in his strides back and forth near the gate, he kept watching the fast approaching group. As they came up, he smilingly advanced with an outstreached hand, which was warmly grasped by Miss Claire, as an eager smile swept over her face. The children instantly opined that he was an old friend of their teacher's which opinions were confirmed later, as he was introduced to them; then all their energies were

bent on summing him up. He was very tall and slender, but portly-looking, with high cheekbones, and so sallow that he looked to be in the last stage of consumption.

"Miss Claire, do all the Tennessee men look like him?" asked the mischievous Cathey, as soon as she was alone with her teacher.

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

"The information came to me incidentally. I started out, early this morning, purposely to hunt up the needy or the neglected; to see if there really were any, and heard of this widow, as I say, incidentally. I was just ready to leave Deacon Webber's, had reached the gate, in fact, when one of the boys hastened out to ask if I had heard of the illness of one of their neighbors."

These words were uttered by Mr. Beamis, pastor of the village church, as he stood, hat in hand, at the front door of the delightful home of Mr. Samuals, Superintendent of the only Sunday school of which the village could boast. The words were addressed to Minta, eldest daughter of Mr. Samuels, and who had an untiring interest in all charitable work.

"You say she lives on the turnpike, beyond Mr. Webber's?" asked Minta, the indubitableness of whose interest was quickly manifested in the tones of her voice and wide-open eyes.

"Exactly," laconically.

"Then I suppose she has recently come into

time, only used on rare occasions, and then they were handled with the utmost care.

Minta Samuels, too, had received fully as many, though entirely dissimilar, consisting, for the most part, of dresses, lamps beautifully shaded, lambrequins, dresser and table scarfs of drawn work, equal to that done by the deft fingers of Mexican Senoritas, Russian rugs, and yes, there was a serviceable tea set. These were gifts from school mates and old friends, consequently valued far beyond their real worth. Why should not the objects of such generosity, such tokens of respect, such love, do by others as they had been done by? Not to do so would be an unvarnished manifesto of the deepest ingratitude.

The children who failed to get gifts one year ago could have been counted on the thumbs of one hand; so all the little tots, and the grown-ups, as for that matter, with the grandfathers and grandmothers, were constantly looking for something to pop down from Fairyland, or other mysterious regions, or else to get some token of respect or appreciation straight hand. No one knew these expectations as did Mr. Beamis." For several days he had heard little else than Christmas! Christmas! Christmas!" He had heard so much that the word had rung in his ears almost constantly, and every object on which his eyes rested seemed to wear a very Christmas-y air, while the atmosphere seemed thrilling with Christmas car-

ols. He saw, heard and felt it on the street, until his mind became so deeply imbued with the prevailing sentiments of the day that, at prayer meeting that night, he gave them a very Christmas-y discourse. He made a Christmas lecture the previous night, his theme being God's gift to humanity, the gift of his richest treasure, the brightest jewel of heaven, to destitute and sinful humanity. He urged them to imitate this beneficent example, to help the poor and needy around them. Giving presents was praiseworthy, even where not needed, for they were tokens of appreciation or affection; but it was worthy still more praise to hunt up the haunts of poverty and distress, and gladden their hearts by useful gifts.

The audience admitted that his advice was good, and very good, so many good resolutions came into existence that night; but the adviser never knew, until the next morning how signally some one had failed to execute some part of his resolution. This he had learned in his Christmas morning tour of the town, while Christmas bells were ringing in his ears, and the flavor of Christmas cake was in his mouth.

This tour was not made in a hurry, either, for he was frequently hindered by attractive scenes, and shouts of, "Hello!" "Christmas gift!" "Merry Christmas!" "What Santa bring you?" and—for the life of him, he could not remember half the salutations. That was his merry Christmas. Ev-

ery one seemed happy and full of good cheer. Every face beamed with Christmas-y greetings, before words were uttered, even. For once, it seemed that some beautiful angel hovered over all hearts alike, causing them to beat in happy unison. The far-away sky, with a new beauty on its radiant face, seemed to smile bountifully upon the prosperous little town. What pastor's heart would not have overflowed with joy and gratitude at the merry Christmas greetings showered so copiously upon Mr. Beamis that morning?

But—

> "No day is so filled with beauty,
> But some lurking cloud doth mar it."

So, before his morning's walk was finished, the Christmas-y beaming in Mr. Beamis' glowing countenance had been displaced by a look in accord with some lamentable scenes, or scene, rather, of some great destitution that came to his observation; and the gladness in his heart had melted into compassion for the poor and suffering. Having failed to find any gap in the charitableness of his people, he made a hurried stroll to Deacon Webber's, in the suburbs of the town, and was leaving, had reached the gate, when one of the boys—boys usually get all the news, but rarely tell it at the right place—called out: Have you been to the Widow Raikes', preacher? Snobby, that's her boy, you know, says she's mighty sick. She's kind o' a inval-id, most anyhow."

"Have you informed your mother about her illness?" asked the minister.

"Not yet, but I have the good intention to, right away."

Mr. Beamis never failed to hear of every case of sickness or destitution in the community. It was considered a part of a preacher's calling, and no small part at that, to visit the sick and the suffering, which convictions had been corroborated by the practice of the ministers until the people had settled on the eternal correctness of them. The true minister always has an open hand and a big heart, but no one had ever surpassed Mr. Beamis for generosity of soul; so, having heard of Mrs. Raikes' illness, he repaired to her home, immediately. "There must be some one in need, some lonely heart to cherish," he had whispered to himself many times that morning, as some mysterious presentiment led him from place to place. On entering the home of the Widow Raikes', he knew there was some truth in the presentiment.

The unkempt yard, the dilapidated rail fence, told their own story; in fact, all the exterior arrangements of the property indicated ruin, waste and devastation; but the greatest surprise burst upon him in the house, where existed unmistakable evidences of deepest, darkest poverty at every turn. The room into which he had been ushered, was carpetless, and almost destitute of furniture. An exceedingly rusty, ancient-looking, iron bed-

stead, an old-styled, badly scarred lampstand, and a few rickety chairs, was the sum total of the room's furnishings. A bright fire burned on the hearth, but that was not sufficient to make a room comfortable where the sun's rays danced so freely through the huge cracks in the walls.

Mrs. Raikes, a veritable picture of ill-health and wretchedness, was half-reclining on an armless rocker. But the wretchedness belonged only to the minister's first impressions of the situation. Her environments were indeed wretched, so were her attire, in fact, there was nothing at all to breathe of aught but wretchedness, until he saw the glow of a face lighted up by a beautiful spirit, and he had heard such words of hope and cheerfulness as were common to people in the best and happiest circumstances of life. Sickness had made ravages upon her body, had almost paralyzed her hands, till her children were bereft of their meager support, yet she talked of the goodness of God, of the beauty of the world, and of the sweetness of life. She had always forced herself to look upon the bright side of things. She would not see how awful was extreme poverty, how destitute she was, but, looking beyond all that, she saw the sweetness and glory of existence, in spite of all opposing powers. "What a noble spirit," Mr. Beamis kept saying to himself.

She had looked so fragile, so pale, and listness, yet he was greeted in a way that assured him of

the cordiality of the welcome. The greeting was so whole-souled, so surprising, that, momentarily, he became wholly oblivious to the things that had awed him, for he seemed to be looking into the face of one who often communed with angels. A few days previous to this visit she had seen Mr. Beamis, learned who he was, came in possession of a brief history of his work there, so her respect for the man was great.

"I have been trying to entertain Christmas thoughts today," she said, after he had introduced himself, and sat dawn. "I never saw the sky look purer, sweeter, or the sunshine brighter, and I don't believe that I ever before had a just appreciation of the snow, the beuutiful snow."

In reply to some remark of his about the intrinsic value of the appreciative spirit, she said: "I sometimes think that the smallest of God's creation is more appreciative of the beauty, the comforts, and the blessings of life, than the human heart. Though man has reasoning faculties that can almost take in the world and its problems with one wide sweep, he doesn't seem to appreciate his environments, the things that were made for him to enjoy. I was watching the snow birds just before you came in. It seemed to me that they would split their dear little throats for sheer joy, as they chirped and twitted and danced, in their downy beds of immaculate whiteness.

Why can't the human heart sing for joy, in summer or winter, as do the birds?"

And when she made the following declaration, her face lighted up with an unusual spiritual beauty: "I sometimes think that my lot is a hard one, unusually hard, until I remember that others are in a much worse condition. There are those who never saw the beauty that our eyes feast upon; there are those who see, but are deprived of the use of feet and hands; there are those who suffer intense pain all the days of their lives; how much better is my condition than any of their's. When my husband died I was able to support myself and children in comfort, but for the last few months I have been disabled most of the time. But I'm thankful, oh, so thankful, that it's no worse! God has given me a cheeful spirit, and I feel so grateful for that."

"I have not seen such faith, no not in Israel," said Mr. Beamis, meaning, of course, his village parish. He was so used to hearing people grumble, even those who had plenty round them. Was it possible that all others had received tokens of good-will and appreciation, and this beautiful spirit had gone unrewarded? He thought of the Master's work on earth, how he ever ministered to the poor and needy. This work he left to his followers; but it was still his work. Forgetting all the sad environments, he found himself humming:

THOUGHT YOU OF JESUS?

In the morning you thought to send,
  Some kind and tender token,
To some true, but distant friend,
  That love's charm might remain unbroken;
Oh, then, did you remember, too,
  That Friend who does so much for you?

Through all the glad day, around, about,
  Did love's gentle streamlet flow,
Within the walls of home, and without,
  Seeds of kindness it did sow;
Then did you neglect love for one,
  Who for good deeds says, "Well done."

He hummed and hummed, but failed to finish the touching strain, because the appearance of four frolicsome, ragged little boys, with dirty faces and dishevelled hair, returned him to a full consciousness of his envioronments.

They had never seen Mr. Beamis, so, after an honest, straightforward look at him, they suddenly paused, and eyed hi min that curious, questioning way so characteristic of childhood. They made special note of the exact size of his nose, the length of his mouth, color of his hair, and the searching, penetrating look in his eyes.

"I don't know 'oo," chirped the least critic, when the oldest brother, believing that Archibald had made a mistake in the mode of his greeting, said, with emphasis: "Santa didn't come this Christmas."

"A dirty little hand went upon the minister's knee, while two little eyes searched the strange face in a childish way. The little fellow's face,

in spite of the dirt, was manly-looking, his pranks and jestures indications of elastic figure and suple muscles. Quite an active clown was he.

"He didn't?" asked the minister, with a surprising tone that stood out clear as crystal to the child-mind.

"No, Sirree; he didn't, and I know why he didn't," he said, in a pompous way.

"Is your reason a secret?"

The boy laughed vehemently, and humorously, the other three joining with him, for, in some mysterious way, they felt that their wise brother was surely getting the grown-up into a trap. One of their greatest pleasures was the thought of mystifying years and wisdom.

"It's no secret, leastways it ain't to us. Even the man in the moon knows why Santa didn't come. Everybody knows it, that's had his eyes open, and seed all the big rains."

"Then it's the high waters—that's the secret. You thought he couldn't cross the waters?" was the minister's laughing reply.

"Don't climp up, sweet, for mamma is too weak and nervous to hold her darling baby," said Mrs. Raikes, in gentle tones, as the little elf began to climb her chair; but he scuddled down in a hurry when the minister took out his gold watch.

Here the second critic took up the subject seemingly exhausted by his older brother, and the variety that he gave it was unique indeed: "De

rains was so big and so hard vat Santa Taus bring'd only a 'ittle, a foo dums and fifts and dolls, and he div'd 'em all way fore he dot here."

Mr. Beamis smiled at the simplicity of the boy's faith. He was touched by it, too, more than he wished to express, but he kept thinking to himself: "How sweet the faith, and how sad if a glamor or cloud should be thrown over it." Was it not better for them to believe that Santa Claus had been hindered, or that he could bring but little, than to know that they had been slighted or neglected? Most children are sensitive to what they consider intentional slights, but these were hardly capable of discriminating between the intentional and the unintentional, because their suspicious nature had been cultivated so little that they never regarded any slight as intentional. Had the news reached them of the wonderful way in which Santa Claus had visited other homes in the village, they would have said, meekly: "He didn't see our 'ittle house till he div 'em all 'way."

Mr. Beamis' sympathy had been stirred to such a wondrous depth that, in spite of his strenuous efforts to hide them, great tears welled up in his eyes, and splashed, like sparkling raindrops, over his cheeks. The touching way in which their great disappointment was appeased had awakened intense emotion in his heart, and placing his hands on two of their little erect heads, he asked:

"And you didn't get mad because Santa failed to come?"

"Not mad; he touldn't help not tomin'. Me go help 'im other time. Me help 'im, and me bing heap o' things," declared one of the boys, in joyous tones, making as large a circle as it was possible for him to make with his arms, in a mock embrace of "heaps o' things." The mere anticipation lighted up his face with a radiancy delightful to behold, and the others, judging by their countenances, believed every word the child had said.

"Their innocence and cheerfulness are a great inspiration to me," said the weak-voiced mother, whose beautiful facial expression told how glad she really was. They enjoy the sunshine and the air, as do the birds, without a thought of the morrow. They never seem to realize that they are in need of anything. Their bouyancy of spirit is indeed a great comfort and inspiration to me."

"It would be most unfortunate for them to be otherwise," said Mr. Beamis, deliberately.

"It would indeed. Should they become discouraged, and murmur at destiny, I would probably lose heart and go under. After all, it's a matter of training, to a large extent, for I've never murmured in their presence."

"There's much, very much, in training," assented Mr. Beamis, mildly.

Why should they murmur? or what did they

know to murmur about? They had known nothing but poverty all their blessed little lives, or, rather, within their blessed little memories, for their circumstances were vastly different in the lifetime of their father, who provided well for his household. The youngest, now two years old, was a cooing babe in long white robes when the father died. The oldest had forgotten about those better days; so, as they had been educated to poverty, it was not surprising that they accepted it so readily.

From the Widow Raikes', Mr. Beamis went immediately to the home of Mr. Samuels, where the conversation, with which this story opens, took place. Minta was a thoughtful, ingenious and sympathetic little lady, who had already been the leader in many enterprises for the relief of the poor and suffering. She inherited her father's extraordinary genius for devising means and plans for contributing the necessaries of life, as well as sunshine and comfort, to the deserving ones; so Mr. Beamis had no sooner given the above information, than a project began to revolve in Manta's vivid imagination. This she immediately imparted to Kate Dean, a particular friend and chum, who was spending the Christmas with her. The project was to summon all the children in the village, or, as many as would freely co-operate with them, and, giving the reasons, urge them to assemble at Mr. H—'s grocery store, at 2:30 p. m. As there were telephone connec-

tions over most all the village, with several boys who would willingly serve as runners, such an undertaking would be easy enough. Only a short time was required for the arrangement of the whole matter; so, at the arrival of the appointed time, they plunged, heart and hand, into this beneficient Christmas work. One of the most delightful scenes ever witnessed could have been seen at the store that afternoon. The children, twenty at the least, gay and full of high spirits, laughed, chattered, and scampered about like fairies, as they jingled and exchanged their silver coin for useful household commodities.

"I shall buy tops and candies, nuts and pops, with my money," cried one little enthusiast.

"And I."

"And I."

"And I," said others, on their arrival at the store.

"Let's not do that. Let's buy substantial things; things that very poor people are apt to need. A few dainties and bawbles are not to be rejected, of course, but let's make them few, because they need other things much more," said the leader of this humane charity band.

"Well said: let the substantials come first, then, if you have money for the non-essentials, all right." This was said by Mr. Beamis, who had been taking cognizance of all that had passed; so the matter was amicably settled now. His

command, in the estimation of these children, was the end of all argument, for no one knew as well as he just how every problem should be adjusted.

"Then I want a barrel of sugar," said Tommie Adkins, with a pompous look at the clerk.

"What in the world do you want with so much sugar?" asked Annie Moon, with dilated eyes. Annie had legitimate reasons for believing that sugar was not the most desirable commodity to be used in such abundance. Once, while scrambling, stealthily, for sugar, she fell into the barrel headforemost, which, though almost empty, contained enough for her to obtain such an enormous bait, added to which was an unsavery sniff of the sugary fumes around her, that she had little relish for sugar or sweetmeats ever after. Her adventure became a standing joke in the community, for it was utterly impossible to conceal so laughable an incident. That occurred two or three years before the events recorded in this story, but it was a circumstance never to be erased from her memory.

"I want it tause sugar's dood," responded Tommie, defensively. He was so accustomed to being laughed at for his baby-brogue that he gave but little heed to the peals of laughter which reverberated in the closed room. He was old enough to speak distinctly, with a correct pronunciation, but some defect of his tongue prevented it.

"There's a barrel of sugar, at your service," the clerk informed him, with a jolly laugh, as he threw his finger in the direction of a huge barrel. "You can have that for twenty-five dollars, even."

Tommie indulged a queer, wimsical smile, but blushed quite satirically when one of the boys said: "Haul out your twenty-five dollars, young man."

"I tought it's a rotation party, and everything was div," cried Tommie, despairingly, amid confusions, blushes, tears, and stammerings.

"You mean a donation party,"Manta correctedd, in her usual kindly and helpful way.

"Y-es, I-did," blushing more effusively.

"But the merchant isn't doing the donating, dear. The donations are our own. We pay the merchant for what we expect to give to the widow and her children. If you have twenty-five cents, or even a dime, you can purchase some useful little article that will be greatly appreciated."

Tommie thrust his hands to the bottom of his pockets, but found nothing save an old barlow knife and some nails. He stood looking half-confused for a moment, then his face suddenly brightened up, and out at the door he bounded.

"I wants something for the widder," said Ben Hazel, immediately upon the exit of Tommie. "I've got two dollars in my pocket, and want something useful for the widder."

"In what line of wares?" asked the clerk.

"Something t'eat I guess, but it's hard to s'lect jest the proper thing that I want."

"You want apricot—" began the clerk, intending to give a list of select eatibles, but Ben thoughtlessly interrupted him by saying:

"I 'spose you mean a summer-cot. Papa uses a summer-cot in warm weather, when zero stands in the nineties, but one o' them things ain't no good this time o' year. Besides, if truth isn't more unreliable than fiction, the widder needs worse things than a cot to sleep on."

Gay peals of laughter almost shook the great house in which they were, and some of the wee tots, who really saw nothing to laugh at, stamped their little boots quite frantically, clapped their hands in high glee, and laughed until pearly tears stood in their shining eyes. Fun is contageous, its fiery flames leaping from heart to heart, and who can resist the combustion when it reaches them? If there is fun in the air one breathes, he will imbibe it, though wholly ignorant of the agent that put it there. This accounts for the merriment of those who failed to understand the situation in the grocery.

"Truth is never unreliable, my boy; that which is unreliable is not truth," said the sagacious Manta, who, with ready insight, saw the point he was driving at.

"I never saw zero up in the ninties. You certainly meant the thermometer," said another,

with a view to keeping up the fun as long as possible.

By this time a can of apricots was held up for inspection, and some one was giving the following explanation: "See these letters, A P R I - C O T S? This can contains apricots, not Aprilcots, nor summer-cots; they are to eat, not to sleep on."

"Have some, Mr. Trader?"

The humiliated boy lowered his eyes, timidly, pushed his hands into his pockets, was ominously silent a moment, and then, as a mischievous twinkle wreathed his countenance, he said, defensively: "Thank you; I shall not take them. Things that have no better reputation than apricots are not worth purchasing."

"Then they are not one of the worse things that a widow needs?"

"Gingersnaps! No! A needy woman wants things that's been tested. I won't even buy a bicycle till I know it's what it's reprehensible to be, and—I like to know what you loggerheads find to laugh at so much," as his speech was completely lost in one great tidal wave of laughter that floated out on the morning air in a way to have drowned any moderate clap of thunder.

"You mean what it was represented to be," corrected Will Jenkins, after the boisterous noise had somewhat subsided; but Ben's entire attention was now concentrated on the true import of

this meeting, and in a way to become triumphant over all petty trivialities. He called loudly to the clerk, who was now in the extreme end of the long store-room:

"Hello, clerk! Pork, hominy and beans—that's what I want now. Father says he's raised on such substantials, and we all know he's not been a failure."

"Hurrah for Ben!" shouted another voice, and a thrilling breeze was stirred up in the room by a unanimous waving of hats, handkerchiefs, and purses. When the pork, hominy and beans were bundled up, and calmness had prevailed, as if by mutual agreement, a full dozen of them rushed to the clerk, all eager to be recognized and waited upon at once; but while he was trying to discriminate between their babeling voices—it reminded him of the scene at the tower of Babel—Sadie Tedford, a five-year-old little tot, with rosy cheeks and modest demeanor, shambled up behind the counter, and whispered softly in the clerk's ear. Soon she appeared with a little square box in her hand, which she tried most assiduously to hide beneath her fluffy blue sleeve.

"What's that, Miss Sa-ded?" interrogated her big—she called him "big"—Brother Sam, with cutting audacity, for he never allowed Sadie to keep a secret, if it was possible for him to ferret it out.

"I sha'n't tell 'oo," pertly.

"You sha'n't? Eh! Then I'll see for myself," as he made a bold dash at the arm under which the mysterious box was concealed. The box fell to the floor, and Sadie, with a horrible consciousness of being vanquished, filled the room with almost as much cry-music as could have been made by a graphophone, or a string-harp.

As the saucy brother snatched up the box, the clerk, in sympathy with the child's scruples anent her secret, kindly dispossessed him of it, lecturing him, in the meantime, for meddling where he had no lawful right to meddle.

"Then I'll buy my charity-articles away from here," he stormed, with vim, rushing out at the door as furiously as a whirlwind.

By this time Tommie Adkins had returned with a bright silver dollar, which was immediately exchanged for sugar. Sugar was his ideal of usefulness when thinking of gifts, and sugar he was determined to contribute. No amount of ridicule could deter him from that purpose. Experience had taught him that half a pound of sugar could appease a boy's hunger, could afford instant relief for any sort of thought-sickness more readily than any panacea he knew of; it could also conciliate wrongs between boys, and actually place a fellow on pleasant terms with one for whom he had had a grudge for ever so long. Sugar would —well, in Tommie's estimation, sugar was the ideal recipe for making one sweet. The fact of

the business was, Tommie had never been permitted to satiate his ravenous appetite for sugar, as Annie Moon permitted hersilf to do on one occasion; so sugar was his ideal of everything that was good and sweet. It was the very best gift that one could make to those who enjoyed so little of the sweets of life. So, while the others were hustling around to find the things they wanted, Tommie closed the bargain for $1.00 worth of sugar.

Soon they were ready for departure, all in jolly good spirits, and every one carried a bundle, or bundles, of some sort. After they had well started on the way, Sam Tedford, with some bundles under his arm, and a triumphant look in his sparkling eyes, joined them. They formed lines, two abreast, and started off as erect, proudly and pompously as a corps of well-trained soldiers under the leadership of some commanding general. It was wonderful how a thought of doing something quite commendable had raised their self-respect to such an important height. The passersby frequently paused to gaze at them, while wondering what could possibly be the meaning of such a grand parade, and venturing extravagant guesses as to the final destination of so many cans, buckets and packages.

But the gay troop took very little notice of these passersby, or anything else that did not occur immediately within their own ranks; there

alone could be found sufficient variety for them, and they had no time for any observance of the pranks or doings of other people. Their far-reaching imaginations and their constant prattles were about: "How will she look and act when we get there? Will these be the very things that she needed? Will she really appreciate them? What should be our salutation, and manner of presenting the gifts?" Their energetic minds were filled with such questions as these.

Manta, alone, had some serious cogitations about the matter. She had been taught to believe that helping the needy was the Christian duty of every man and woman, so she saw more than the superficial side of the occasion, as discerned by the other children. Still, she had a wise and deft way of associating duty and pleasure, a way in which the pleasures never detracted one whit from the secredness of duty. Ability and discretion in the performance, with a full enjoyment of the duty, were natural endowments of hers.

And so they trudged along, talking and planning and laughing, fearless as a body of brigade doubly sure of victory, until a huge, shaggy-haired cow, swishing her tail frantically and tossing her head high in the air, came tilting across the street at a furious rate.

"Oh, that's Mr. Jackson's old hooky cow!" cried one of the boys, darting off like a wild animal.

"And she smells our wares," assured Kate Dean, striking out after the retreating renegade in a full tilt.

Then they all began to run, scattering like a batch of clouds with a boisterous wind behind it, when Sam Tedford stumped his foot against an ugly stone, and toppled over on the ground. His loud scream and yells attracted the attention of those in advance, who, anxious to learn the extent of a comrade's injury, even if they must have a battle with a cow, promptly retraced their foot-steps. They could forego much danger in order to be of service to a brother and fellow-helper in a good cause; so, they became so deeply absorbed in Ben's condition, his prostrate body and his yells, that the primal cause of the disaster had entirely escaped them, when, sudden as a sunburst from behind a cloud, the grisly old cow appeared in their midst again, and was stealthily sniffing at the bundles, which Ben, in his sudden downfall, had scattered pell-mell into the snow.

"That's old-timy Indian maize hominy, and she smells it. Wah! Get you 'way, and let her have it; then she'll let us alone," said Tommie, quite authoritatively, as he bravely took a stand between the company and the cow.

"Fie! She don't smell it, either. You don't know what you're talking about, boy, and had better leave off your placard of ignorance. How can a cow smell corn that's sealed up in a tin

can?" retorted Annie Moon, in her characteristic way of avenging an enemy, for Tommie had teased her more than a little about the sugar.

"I's never se ig'rant as to make meself sick on sugar," sneered Tommie, in a way that brought roses to Annie's plump cheeks.

"I know cows do smell things; mamma says they do. She said that one smelt through whit leather one time," spoke Ben Hazel, in steady defense of his friend, Tommie.

"You mean soul leather," corrected Tommie.

"Leather ain't got no soul; but cows can smell through bigger and worse things than so-leather. Our old cow smelled salt through our log-house, smoke-meat one time, and she licked the outside to get the salt which was inside," Sadie's little tongue rattled off, in spite of the laughter that almost drowned her words.

By this time the cow had failed to discover anything very palatable about the cans, and made a frightful lunge at a boy with a twenty-five-pound sack of flour on his shoulder.

"Hit her with it! Throw it at her! The huzza! Don't you see she's starving to death, and won't let us 'lone till she gets a bite?"

The command was instantly obeyed, when vexation from that source ended, for the mischievous cow's great white teeth dived into the sack of flour with an impetuosity that was surprising to behold.

Now, with one accord, those who had been engaged in the above conversation, huddled around Sadie's brother, and soon discovered that wonders had been wrought by sympathizing friends while they were settling the cow affair. As a result of his fall, Sam had an ugly gash in his forehead, and all the nearby homes had been ransacked for something to stop the bleeding. Some of the amatuers asked for paris green, some for mucilage or postal stamps, while others, the more experienced ones, wanted a small square of surgeon's sticking-plaster. They were fortunate, after a long and tedious search, in obtaining the plaster. After wisely mopping the blood from his brow, Manta closed the wound and applied the plaster.

"It seems that some one's hurt," said a gentleman, whose attention was first attracted by the crimson spots of blood on the snow, for the wound had bled profusely.

"And your old cow was the tause," blurted out Tommie, bravely and stoutly.

"My old cow? What funny children! to know my old cow so long and yet not understand her. Why, she'd not harm a fly that torments her on a hot summer day. My children make a playfellow of her, have her get on her back to be milked at noonday, carry them all on her flat back at once, and many other such tricks they have taught her."

"But she has a bad reputation in the town, and that makes us boys afraid of her," said one of the boys, briskly.

"That's simply because folks don't understand her, or else they are envious of her good qualities. She's more learned than any cow I ever saw, and her ways are not like others; that daunts the people, or makes them envious. My children play with her, and have her to run after them, as a dog would. She enjoys such fun, and how foolish of you children to become frightened at her pranks. You could have said: 'Go back Piny,' and she would have retreated at once. She's a most obedient beast; that cow is."

"But she quit running us when she got the sack of flour," laughed Ben, throwing his hand in the direction of the badly mutilated sack, where the flour and snow had been mixed into a wholesome compound by the thrice happy Piny.

"It's too baad that you failed to understand my dear Piny," reiterated Mr. Jackson, while fubling in his pocket for his money bag. Paying them the full value of the flour, he bade them adieu, and passed on.

When ready to pursue their journey, Sam yelled again at the top of his voice; when questioned as to the cause of this new outburst, he said, in despairing tones: "I do so want to help take the things to the widder's, and see what she does and says."

"What's to hinder you, if your head doesn't hurt very much?" asked Manta, with a quizzical look in her bright eyes.

"How can I? Look at all that blood on the snow!" He thought that something serious must be behind all that blood, but the others failed to understand the cause he was pleading.

"The blood—fiddlesticks! You don't want to stay here with that blood, do you? That's gone, my boy, eternally gone, so it is now your indispensable duty to make what you have left better, and that by living above the corruptions of the flesh." This miniature sermon came from Amis Beamis, son of the minister, and who, judging by his past life, works, and conversation, had secret notions of following his father's footsteps in the holy calling.

A laugh ensued, and as Sam took the admonition quite meekly, they trotted off again, as bouyant and as expectant as the most successful financiers. Coming to a grocery, another sack of flour was procured, to replace the one that old Piny had gobbled down. A few more moments of stamping, chattering, and laughing, and they were knocking for admittance at the Wodow Raikes' door.

"Open the door, Justice," they heard some one say within. The only response was a weak attempt to turn the handle.

"Open the door, Justice. Whoever it is may be cold," was heard again, distinctly.

"If she knew what we had she'd open it herself," whispered one of the girls, softly.

A firmer jerk was given the handle, but the latch refused to yield the least little bit.

A score of merry voices were laughing outside.

Then came the summons: "Open the door, and come in."

The door opened immediately, and in trooped twenty-odd children, each with a bundle, or bundles, in his or her arm, and some of them had just about as much as they could well wag along. These were all deposited, in a heap, to the left of the door, all except Sadie's box, which was carried directly to Mrs. Raikes, and the sweet little donor whispered quite softly: "They's stockings; don't let the boys see 'em."

"I'll find out some day, Miss; see if I don't?" said Sam, tantalizingly.

The little charity band now gathered around the fire to warm their red fingers, standing in a beautifully curved semi-circle, and smiling at each other in a comical way. Standing? Yes, *standing,* because there were not half enough chairs for so many, and the few they saw were bottomless, or almost so. Sadie, who seemed to be the most fatigued of the band, heedlessly dumped herself into one of these, and went to the floor with a vim and a scream that brought every one immediately

to her rescure. Owing to her squeezing position between the rounds, and their fear of hurting her, it was some time before she was fairly extricated; but, when free again, she said, undauntedly: "Vat chair not made for 'ittle folks."

Only one boy had sufficient courage to laugh at the childish prattle. Why was it that the others did not laugh? especially since it was the first failure, when there was anything to laugh at. They were too deeply affected by what had transpired soon after their entrance into this poverty-stricken home: when she saw the flour, potatoes, polk, dressed chicken, pickles, canned fruits, and, judging by the shape of the bundles, dry goods, —oh, so many, many things—Mrs. Raikes was so overwhelmingly affected by surprise and gratitude, that she wept great floods of grateful tears. Some of the most unsurmising of the children were indescribably astonished, thinking that she must have felt greatly insulted, or something equally as enormous. Others thought that it meant that, because she was so sick she thought she would not live to enjoy the rich gifts, and this conclusion filled their young minds with serious apprehensions. Manta, perhaps, was the only one that guessed the true cause of the woman's deep emotions—a gratitude which was so great and inexpressible that its only possible outlet was streaming tears; and the truth of this guess was verified by the speech she made, when her

deep emotions and tears had calmed somewhat:

"May God bless every one of you. You don't know how glad I am, and words can never do justice to my feelings. His promise to the widow and orphans is sure and steadfast. Sometimes, and just when we are ready to doubt that promise, beautiful angels bound in with gifts in all their hands. You are every one angels, and I pray God's richest blessings upon every one of you." How beautiful was the glow in her face when she had finished speaking.

"Did Santa Taus div 'em to 'oo, and tell 'oo bing 'em here?" asked one of the little optimists.

"No, I think that God must have worked the affair through Mr. Beamis," said Manta, placing a hand on the boy's head in a tender way.

Such a striking, lovely scene! It would be impossible to give a true description of it—of the gladness of the mother, and the utter delight of the boys.

Though she had been the principal leader in many a charitable work, Manta was never so happy in all her life; and Mr. Beamis, when informed about the grateful reception of the children and their gifts, leaned his head over on his hands and wept tears of joy.

BEGINNING OF SORROW.

The next morning, following the arrival of the stranger, Miss Claire did not say: "Let us take a tramp," as she usually did; instead, she joined the tall, elegant-looking man under one of the whispering elms, on the wide, green lawn. For sometime they promenaded, slowly and liesurely, engaged, apparently, in a most interesting conversation, after which they sat down in a dense shady nook, choosing two chairs about six feet apart, instead of occupying, jointly, a most unique settee that must have been made especially for those who had secrets to impart.

Such disappointed and restless children no one ever saw. The day was completely marred, all the happy sunshine dispersed, for them, and they, at least Cathey and Paul, declared vehemently that they would not learn a single ioto about their lessons that day. Paul had always been a great stickler for the company of boys and men who frequently visited their country home, but here was a man for whom he had conceived a great dislike, and whose company he shunned, because

he was monopolizing the time and attention of his teacher, which was not her's, but her pupils. Deprived of the enjoyment of his morning ramble, and he was a cross-patch all day, like an angry bee when driven from the chalice of the flowers, and his love for one who interfered with those rambles was like the rays of light on the surface of marble—not very deep. The strange gentleman, Mr. Randolph, as well as all the inmates of the household, was fully conscious of Paul's discomforture.

If any difference, Cathey's perturbance was greater than Paul's. For the last twelve months she had clung to her governess as tenaciously as the shoots and tendrils cling to the vine, feeling that, in some inexpressible way, she was wholly dependent upon her for every amusement and enjoyment, and her morning walks were the paradisean center of all those pleasures and amusements. Nothing but unpropitious weather caused those walks to be abandoned, and now, this glowing, sunshiny day, to have their beloved chaperon cooped up in the shade, talking to an intruder—this was more than she could well endure.

"I do wish, Mother, that Mr. Monopoler handn't come," she said, after an unsuccessful search for satisfactory amusement up-stairs, in the garret, the garden, in fact everywhere that she could possibly go unseen by the two under the tree. Monopoler was the family name for

every one who tried to monopolize the entire time of any one.

"You should not be selfish, dear. Miss Claire has been yours for more than a year now. Not a day, not a recreation, or amusement of any sort, but she has been your constant companion, your friend, your counselor; and now you should be perfectly willing for her to entertain this friend who came so far to see her," said the mother, laying aside the embroidery on which she had been working, and throwing an arm around the disappointed little girl.

"Is he a relative of Miss Claire's, Mother?"

"I think not."

"Then he has no earthly right to 'fringe upon our rights. Miss Claire belongs to us by rights, for we are paying for her! so her time is our's sclusively."

"That is selfish, darling. Mr. Randolph has been her friend much longer than you have, and he has shown wonderful kindness by letting you keep her all to yourself so long. Though he is her best friend, this is his first intrusion, as you would call it, in twelve months. If his patience and generosity count for but little, you should at least have sympathy for his affliction. He is doubtless in the last stage of consumption, and, in my opinion, a worthy object of the truest compassion."

"But, Mother, why does she want a friend who is so bad with the sick all the time, and who

coughs all the time?" asked Cathey, in serious tones, as she fingered the bright waves of glossy hair that fringed her mother's white forehead.

"Could one forsake a friend because of sickness, dear? Sickness or misfortunes of any kind, always make true friendships firmer and tenderer. And I know that Mr. Randolph has all the requisites for beautiful friendship. He has the finest mind, the noblest sensibilities of any one I ever personally knew. Years of affliction has refined his nature until he is a fit companion for angels. The girl is not to blame for adoring him."

"She can adore him, Mother, and yet not neglect us," chirped Cathey, relentless to the last, and the expression on her face, as she swept out of the room, proved that the conversation had not reconciled her to the circumstance.

Meeting Paul in the hall, they joined hands, and skipped out to the carnation and mignonette beds, where some of the seeds had been planted to form a V, some to make a dimond-shape, and some the initials of Bertha, Cathey and Paul. They cared not so much about the flowers, at this critical instance, as to exhibit a spark of revenge, for the two under the tree had been passed as though they knew not of their existence; so when the flowers had received a mere touch and glance, and the truants had started to the house again, in reply to a request from Miss Claire, they said:

"We can't come out there; it's school time, and we have to get our lessons."

They were correct; it was school time. The governess, well aware of that fact some minutes ago, was taking advantage of the last few moments by making inquiries anent Mr. Randolph's three children, beautiful and accomplished when she saw them last, but it was indeed a shock to hear that the oldest, a promising boy, had, since his father's inability to keep up with him, grown to be very stubborn and disobedient.

Arrived up-stairs, Cathey and Paul, extremely reticent, betook themselves to their books, forgetting, of course, their threats in the early morning; but their faces wore a nonchallant expression that seemed to say: "I don't want to study."

On Bertha's face was a look of mysterious sadness, as though harrassed by a presentiment of some future storm, or inevitable loss of some kind. She stood in the door, making invisible letters with her finger on the oaken panel, until Miss Claire came up, and then she threw both arms about her waist, while her eyes looked the deep and tender feeling she had not words to express. Two pearly drops beautified those tender orbs, and there rushed to Miss Claire the suspicion that her secret had been discovered. Many times had Bertha seen Col. Abel Randolph on tiny, perfumed envelopes, that went to the nearby, country postoffice, but not a suspicion did she

have of their true import until she saw them together; then alone did unwavering belief come. Their mutual look of understanding, tenderness, love, and the intense happiness depicted in her teacher's countenance—all this was a silent revelator of the unwelcome truth that a separation was near at hand; that she must say "Good-bye" to one whose beautiful life had been an inspiration to her for a long and sweet year.

Yes, Miss Claire saw that this wise and beloved pupil was now in possession of this well-guarded secret, and she had not a word of denial when the subject was broached. During school hours she seemed more serious, more thoughtful, than at any time since the advent of Mr. Randolph, and as quickly as possible, during the noonday intermission, she sauntered out to where he was half-reclining on a rustic chair. Only a few words were exchanged, after which she had a short conversation with Mrs. Bohanan in the library, then she hurried into the conservatory, where the children, with sad or stubborn faces, were discussing an important subject.

Cathey and Paul glided out, with kitten-like steps, as soon as the governess entered, for their little stricken hearts had been piqued anew, when, after spending the entire morning with Mr. Monopoler, she was so willing to desert them again. She had thrown them aside for a stranger, and that was plenary evidence, to them, that she liked

him the best; so these jealous little human angels, when they saw her coming, scooted out, leaving her deeply involved in a mystery as to the meaning of their conduct.

But Bertha, the brave, the true, the beloved, her never-failing friend, standing amid the tender sprigs of sundew, toxicaria, regia, and numerous other tender plants, was ready to receive her, with an appreciative heart, and a smiling face.

"Yes, it is true," said Miss Claire, without a moment's hesitation. "But you know that severing these present ties will sting my heart. Ah, my heart was stung with a great bitterness, but that sting is being lessened more and more by the prospect of a future filled with love, and noble work for one who is so deserving."

She paused a moment, and then went on: "I see it all; I understand it. He's an invalid with three children, and, in casting my lot with him, I am fully aware of the cares, the sacrifices, the possible heart-pangs, awaiting me. I have weighed it all; but love hopeth all things, endureth all things. If I didn't love him as I do, I'd have such respect for him as no woman ever had for man, respect for his wonderful intellect, his generosity of soul, his honor, and that respect would make me serve him as loyally as any queen ever served her king.

Bertha leaned her head on Miss Claire's bosom, and sobbed like a heart-broken baby. "I

knew that you'd do something splendid some day; I knew it, oh, I knew it! It breaks my heart to give you up, yet I can do it because of the cause you espouse. Before you mentioned it, before my mother praised him so, I knew he must be no ordinary man; he is so intelligent, and—spiritual. He seems to know everything worth knowing."

Tears rushed to Miss Claire's eyes, and for a few moments they sobbed together; but suddenly, with a rift of light behind the tears, Bertha raised her eyes and said: "I can never thank you for all you've done for me. You found me a good-for-little, ambitionless girl, paying but little heed to the gifts with which I had been endowed, but the sweet touch of your life gave me noble aspirations to make the best of myself that I possibly could, to acquire wisdom, and to learn the deepest beauty and meaning of life. Your poems and stories have been like heaven's dew to my famished soul. The one I found on the flyleaf of your book, "Language of the Stars," I flattered myself, after pouring over it time and again, the meaning was clear, but I never had the full meaning until now. I never knew before what love could do. The sentiments of that poem are being verified in your beautiful self-sacrificing life."

Miss Claire took this undeserved praise, so she termed it, as meekly as ever. For a few moments she looked at Bertha very quietly, and then the speaker continued: "Your poems on nature

taught me how beautiful the world is, and your stories—oh, they taught me how to choose the best, the noblest, the sweetest in life, and to love my neighbor as self. You taught me the importance of knowing all valuable history, and the beautiful lives you sketched filled me with an inexpressible longing to learn all I can of every—beautiful person I—know; beautiful character, you know, I mean. In short you made me see a star, the effulgence of which will lead me on and on."

For the first time since she had been in charge of these lovely pupils, Miss Claire was spell-bound, hardly knowing what to do or say, but finally she whispered some very sweet words, words which we will leave the reader to guess at for the present, and then she clasped the confiding, loving pupil in her arms.

Half an hour later Bertha and her mother were mingling their tears, for she had come in possession of the secret when Miss Claire was on her way from the conservatory.

That night, her last night with this beloved family, while the others were roving through the beautiful land of dreams, Miss Claire wrote her last story, "Where the Shepherds Went," and read it to them the next morning.

WHERE THE GOOD SHEPHERDS WENT.

WHERE THE SHEPHERDS WENT.

Beyond the ethereal space where the birdies fly,
Beyond the splendid blue of the star-decked sky,
Out from his magnificent, kindly throne,
Round which seraphs and cherubims in regal beauty roam
From all celestial splendors and pure delights,
With a purified throng robed in spotless white,
Down, down he came, to take earth's lowliest place,
To be one with, to bless, and to save a fallen race,
To shine, to shine as the bright and morning star,
'Till the glad tidings of his salvation spreads afar.

Several years ago, when churches and chapels were not near so numerous as now, when either was quite a rarity in the mountain regions of Tennessee and Virginia, where a great many people had never heard a gospel sermon, and where a vast majority of the children hardly knew the meaning of Sunday school—in this mountainous and destitute region, a fourteen-year-old and fearless boy, Mike Simms, was trudging along a narrow and meandering mountain path just at dusk one Christmas-eve day. All around him was bleakness and shadowy darkness, with the weird and solemn stillness one invariably encounters in

some mountain countries, but the brilliant stars, growing more numerous with the on-coming darkness, twinkled like sparkling diamonds in the azure heights above. The solemn, shadowy environments filled him with awe, a strange, thrilling sense of lonliness, and inspired him with a deep, longing desire to be at home with loved ones; but those luminous stars above, like beaming, omniscent eyes, seemed to keep a constant vigilance over him, ready for his defense at any moment, should danger arise, and he began to look upon them as the most imminent of friends. He saw a new beauty in those sparkling gems tonight, for they seemed to watch over his foot-steps, to shed light on his path-way, to ward off danger, and so they twined many a beautiful thought in his imagination as he trudged along this lonely path-way.

In order to spend this Christmas with some cousins, Mike had walked incessantly all the day, stopping just long enough for his lunch at noonday, and now, when near his destination, he was tender-footed and almost faint-hearted. Though it had been three years since his former visit there, he felt doubly sure that he would instantly recognize the locality in which these cousins lived, for he had played many a game with them there, and did he not yet remember the old school house, and the log barn, from the great loft of which he had made many a tumble into the soft and

yielding hay below? Yes, he would know these; he had not the least doubt about knowing these places. While these thoughts were revolving in his mind, some of these familiar objects suddenly came to his view, fully assuring him of the correctness of his memory. There was the identical old school house, scarred and weather beaten now, in which the young people had a jolly Christmas frolic three years ago, and it was now lighted up quite brilliantly. Through the windows he could see the merry crowd of people; he could hear the constant chatter of innumerable voices, and, opining a similar occasion to the last one witnessed there, his young heart leaped with pure delight. Forgetting that he was fatigued, that he was home-sick, and even forgetting his beautiful thoughts about the stars, he quickened his speed, but, just as he reached the door and was ready to enter, the lights were all suddenly extinguished. For quite a time merry voices and gay laughter floated out on the soft night air. As he listened to these musical voices, great was the wonder and curiosity that possessed Mike's heart. "What can be the meaning of it all, anyway?" he asked himself.

He summoned the courage to enter, however, when, at the far end of the broad aisles, he saw a flickering light on the rostrum, where a tall, intelligent-seeming gentleman was giving some explanations of a scene to be presently exhibited.

The auditorium was now in semi-darkness, but the boy soon discovered that it was not a young people's festival, as he had witnessed three years ago.

He was confronted by a well filled house, with no available room in the pews for another single auditor, but perceiving a desk mid-way the pews, fronting the rostrum, he quietly perched himself upon that, and was soon lost to all save that which was being enacted for the pleasure and benefit of the audience. He had heard, distinctly, too, the speaker's announcement of the first scene, after which he had no ears or eyes for anything around him, until the conclusion of this delightful and interesting exhibition.

Hearts beat rapidly, aye, more hearts than Mike's, and appreciatory utterances rippled over the entire audience, at that first scene, a grand presentation of life-size pictures, rendered most thrilling and life-like by the aid of a wonderful Magic Lantern. It was indeed majestic, beyond words to portray, so natural looking, and so inspiring—that first vision. The scene was a grassy plain. sometimes called the Field of Angels, sometimes dotted profusely with snowy-white flowers, and in the midst of this magnificent plain was a Shepherd's Watch-tower, where some venerable men were watching sheep at night. Above their heads were twinkling stars, bright, beaming, similar to those which had so interested Mike in his

lonely walk after dark. Instantly—it was performed in some deft way that seemed to bring the radient being from the sky—a beautiful winged creature stood in the midst of the Shepherds, who, because of the exceeding glory of the angel, seemed greatly frightened for a moment, until a sweet voice, in low, melodious tones, said: "Fear not, for, behold, I bring good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall see the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

At the exceeding beauty of this celestial being, after the wonderful things he said had somewhat moderated their fears, the Shepherds, with expressions of surprise, awe, and exceeding great joy, were just ready to fall on their knees in holy adoration of the mysterious visitor, when a great host of smiling ones appeared on the scene, and then several sweet, sonorous voices sang quite touchingly: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Immediately the angels disappeared above the starry clime, leaving a wonderful stillness in the glowing, radient night, and then one of the venerable Shepherds, he with the trusting, child-like faith, said: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this wonderful thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

The Shepherds disappeared; darkness fell upon the scene.

What had Mike ever seen in his dear little life before? He was bewildered, entranced, overcome. He had drunk it all in, mind, soul, and body, as flowers drink in the morning's dew, and his senses were so enraptured, so thoroughly absorbed by it all, that it became a living, thrilling reality to him. He had looked upon the Shepherds, living, breathing men, so he thought, for it seemed so real and human like, and he was so strangely entranced by it, that the picture element was entirely lost by him; and he had heard the voices, then wonderful words; lost he was to environments, and so enraptured by the beauty of the scene that he stepped from his high perch, walked up to the rostrum, and asked: "Please, sir, which way did the Shepherds go?"

"You will see them presently," said the amused gentleman, silently eulogizing his wonderful skill in the execution of this work; so the boy, as the truth began to dawn upon him, for the spell was breaking, resumed his position on the desk.

"I don't wonder at the boy's marvelous incredulity," said an old gentleman, with solemn voice. "If human beings ever moved and breathed in pictures, they did in those."

Mike had not long to wait for the Shepherds to get there, however, for, when that wonderful light flashed out again, exhibiting bright and

gleaming faces, he saw the Shepherds, with those mysterious expressions of awe, astonishment, and great joy, yet on their glowing faces, leaning quietly over the object of their search and adoration—a beautiful babe, like unto other babes, only a more heavenly sweetness was imprinted on his fair countenance. He was indeed fairer than the most beautiful flowers, than the sparkling stars, or the most splendid painting of any human being the world had ever produced, for none of these contain the loveliness and the celestial beauty depicted in that face. The image of heaven itself, he was the Christ-cihld, the Messiah, the Saviour of the people, and of whom the prophets had all written. Many a longing and waiting heart had desired to see him, and now, that he had come, it was earth and heaven met in this lowly place, but the lowliness of which was unobserved by those ravished and worshiping Shepherds. To crown all, the mother was nearby, and, as her eyes feasted on the beauty of her darling, her countenance beamed with divine joy.

Mike could hardly keep his perch on the desk, so eager was he to be in there, and to lay his hand on what seemed to be a living babe; but his thoughts were soon arrested by a voice in clear, clarion tones, saying: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be

called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Instantly another voice said: "His cheeks are as a bed of spices: his lips like lillies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh."

Still another one said: "He will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

Then the well-trained voices sang this song:

OUR FATHER'S RICHES.

He wears the royal crown,
None rich as He,
The world's wide lands he owns
From sea to sea;
The orb that rules the days,
The starry space,
The spirit real he sways,
With Kingly grace.

Countless worlds do bow,
In adoration,
Of his wisdom and power
In creation;
His mercy deep and brave,
None can measure;
For fallen man he gave,
His heart's treasure.

This, each angel sweet and dear,
Its fullness knows,
All that celestial Sphere
His love o'erflows,
And comes to earth to improve,
And to incline
Vilest hearts, by lifting above,
To the divine.

Our Father's riches are sure,
We're rich in Him;
This to our hearts was secure
When Christ came in;
But richer still we will be,
With fuller share,
When in his likeness we're free,
Just over there.

Mike listened intently to the song, and imbibed a touch of its deepest meaning. He had come to realize, fully, that it was only pictures he saw, and, with the realization, tried to discover who the speakers were, but met with a signal failure.

When the curtain went down on that last scene, and the audience had been dismissed, a solitary little boy, with beaming eyes and fast beating heart, stole quietly out of the crowded house, then, in thoughtful mood and alone, wended his way to the home of his relatives. His mind was too full of the wonderful things that he had seen and heard, to conjecture, even, that they, too, might be at the school-house.

His aunt and uncle were there, and had sought dilligently for him, after he left, but the young people, because of some indisposition among some of them, remained at home. They were truly glad to see him, but he talked of nothing, until long after mid-night, but the beautiful pictures he had seen. Falling asleep, he dreamed it all over again, the flowers, the stars, the Shepherds, the angels, the beautiful babe, and awakened the next morning with it all vivid and fresh in his memory.

Though he had expected to spend Christmas day with his relatives, his first impulse, when he woke, was to turn his steps homeward, and tell his mother about those exquisite pictures; for he was yet as deeply enthused as though he had really looked upon living angels, and the real Christ-child. He had no sooner made the resolution, than it was carried into effect.

That night, just as the stars began to peep down upon the happy earth again, Mike, with glowing face and throbbing heart, stood in the presence of his mother, and, waiving the words of surprise with which he had been greeted, said quite briskly: "The angels! Why, they just beat the worl—you ought to a seen them, Ma! I saw the flowers that one of the Shepherds got, and then the next thing I saw them in that—what do you call it?—ghan, or some such name; and upon my life, Ma, there was the babe, as plain as that little May there! Did you ever see sich a sight as that in all your life—pictures made to look like human beings? I do wish you could a been there. Come out here, Ma. Do you see them stars up there?"

"Ye-s."

"Well, I saw stars as plain as them, and can almost see the angels come out of them now," he declared, almost breathlessly.

"But what are you talking about, Mike? And

where did you see such things?" asked the bewildered mother.

"Why, it's the pictures that a man showed by a Magic Lantern—that's what I'm talking about. He showed where the angels come, and told the Shepherds about Christ; then he showed when the Shepherds found Christ in the manger. Uncle said it would a been no plainer to him, if he had a been with them angels, or Shepherds, I mean."

Mrs. Simms made no reply, but hurried back into the house, threw every article of clothing out of an old dilapidated, leather-bound trunk, and brought forth an old yellowed, time-worn Bible, a gift from her grandfather Simms, which had lain in the bottom of that trunk for many years. A folded sheet of paper lay snugly between the first and second chapter of St. Luke, where was the wonderful account of the identical things of which Mike had been speaking. She read those chapters, slowly and thoughtfully, then folded the paper, intensely yellowed by age, though the chirography was legible enough. The following paragraph is a fair specimen of what the paper contained:

"The angels heralded his coming, which was as a star of hope rising in a world of exceeding darkness. As the star led the Magi to his temporary retreat, so he became a Star to lead men to his eternal abode. As a star he has been to my life, through many a conflict and many a victory,

and now, when ready to be piloted over Jordan's tide, he shines in my heart with a brighter effulgence than ever before."

The name assigned to this paper was W. G. Simms, a minister of the gospel, and her grandfather. Ah, she was a tiny girl in pinafores when she saw his gray head last, but the recollection brought tears to her eyes. His many struggles, his conflicts and victories, in times when it often meant martyrdom to be true and brave, had all been faithfully recounted to her by her parents.

"I will keep this Bible out, and read it," she said, as those long ago events came vividly to her memory.

"Wish you would, Ma. and then teach it all to me," said Mike, with manly voice.

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"No other one has ever lived who was so great, so pure, so noble, and so worthy our greatest adoration," said Bertha, thoughtfully, when Miss Claire had finished reading.

"No other," laconically.

That evening, in the brilliantly lighted parlor, where the delicious atmosphere was sweet with the aroma of ferns and cut flowers, with no witnesses save the immediate family and the bride's brother, Robert Laroue, the solemn words that made Mr. Randolph and Miss Claire Laroue

man and wife were pronounced. It was a touching scene, and a deep solemnity pervaded the household.

By the next morning Cathey's and Paul's opinions, respecting Miss Claire's desertion of them, had gone through a marvelous transformation. They understood why she sought Mr. Randolph's company, and now, realizing that they would be deprived of her sweet association for all future time, their bitterness and revenge melted like snow in the sun's warm rays, and in their stead was born the deepest, most sympathetic grief.

"I wouldn't a got mad at her at all, truly I wouldn't, if I had a known she's going to leave so soon," wailed Paul, with a throbbing heart, and the confession was also a true echo of Cathey's sentiments.

It was utterly impossible to reconcile them to the gloomy situation, until a promise was made to take them to Tennessee where they could see the poetic little hollow that used to be Miss Claire's home.

If this simple little volume is well enough received, the author may, at some future time, have something more to say about Miss Claire and her pupils, but the change in the story will be as obvious as that in the governess' life.